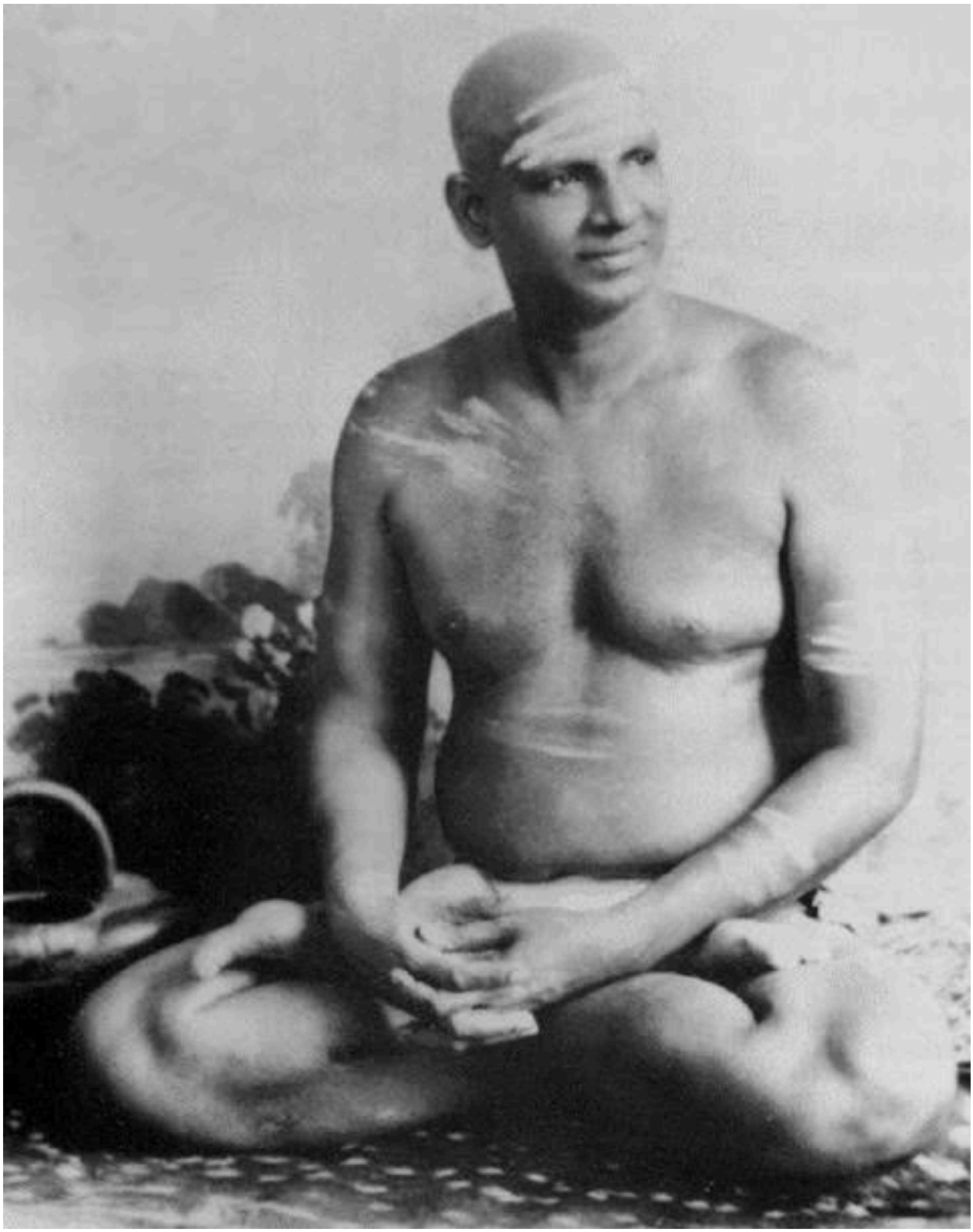

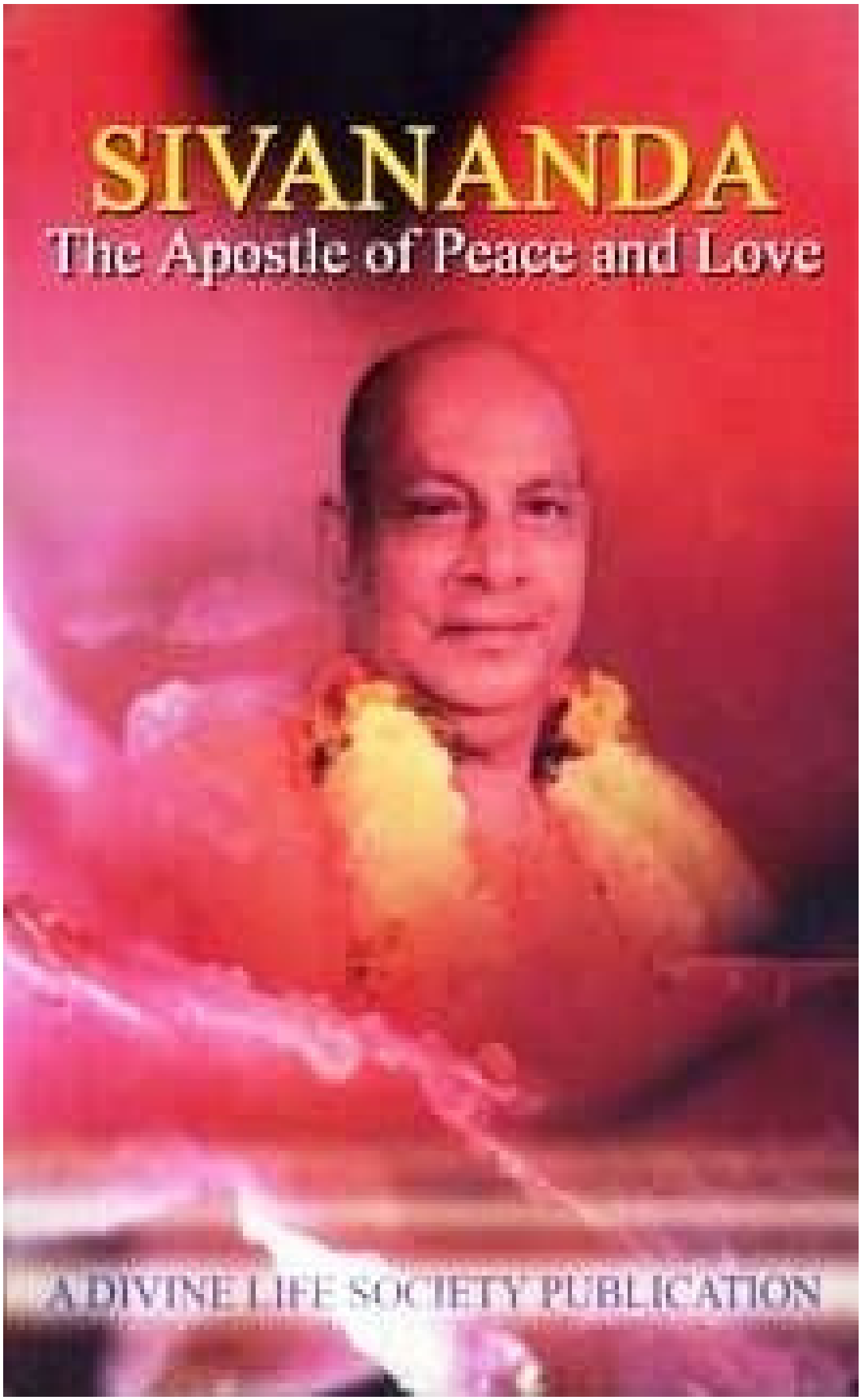
SIVANANDA
The Apostle of Peace and Love
A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION

SIVANANDA

THE APOSTLEOFPEACEAND LOVE

By

SRI SWAMI PARAMANANDA

Author

Swami Paramananda

with Gurudev

Sri Swami Sivanandaji

A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION

To SIVA

The Indescribable
Divinity This Flower is

Offered in Humble Worship

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A Rare Combination

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Our Privilege

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This comprehensive life-sketch and character-study of one of the greatest living sages, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, by one who has, during the most eventful period of Swamiji's life, been a very close follower and associate, reveals many intimate traits in one who is today acclaimed by sincere seekers after Truth all over the world as an unrivalled man-of-God. The elements of godliness that go into the make- up of a saint have been clearly brought out by the author and are sure to offer the spiritual aspirant invaluable guidance in his march to the goal. While studying this book, the reader will feel that he is in the immediate presence of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

On the afternoon of 24th November 1953, Sri Swami Paramanandaji produced his thrilling article "Meet Swami Sivananda". The other thrillers from Paramanandaji's pen were also collected and within thirty-six hours the first edition of this book had seen the light of the day. It is a great miracle: mind you, those were the days of hand-composing and manually-operated Treadle machines. Thousands have read and admired Paramanandaji's articles, and this book is a collection of them all.

Sri Swami Paramanandaji Maharaj, the author of this book, was born on the 15th of February, 1907, in the town of Nagore in South India, as the youngest son of the prosperous Brahmin couple Sri N. Sambamurthy and Smt. Sundarambal. He was known as S. Jayaraman in his Purvashram. After his early education in Nagore itself, he served for a short time as a teacher in the local Catholic Mission School. He then went to Madras in 1927 and got employed in the Railways. The young boy, who had an adventurous spirit and an innate urge for renunciation, happened to read Swami Sivanandaji's first writing 'Practice of Yoga' at the Connemera Library, Madras, in 1929. He started postal

correspondence with Swami Sivanandaji and expressed his wish to renounce the world and join him at Rishikesh. He was, however, advised not to be hasty in giving up his job but to serve the Ramakrishna Mission. But Jayaraman's zeal could not be subdued and he went to Rishikesh to have Swami Sivanandaji's Darshan in December 1930. Swamiji was, however, not there; he was on a long tour. After a few days' stay at Swarga Ashram, Jayaraman made a bee-line to the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram in Calcutta and became an attaché to Sriman Mahapurushji Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, one of the first disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. As a disciple of Sri Mahapurushji, he served him with heart and soul and got himself endeared to the Swamiji. On the Mahasamadhi of Mahapurushji, Jayaraman felt impelled to reach the feet of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj of Rishikesh and forthwith reached the sacred banks of the Ganga. Swami Sivanandaji initiated him into the order of Sannyasa, under the monastic name of Swami Paramananda, in the year 1932, in Swarga Ashram.

Paramananda joined Sivanandaji when the latter had really no Ashram of his own, and was taking his Bhiksha from the Annakshetra of Swarga Ashram, living in a neglected, dilapidated hut. Paramananda had naturally to be happy with a rough life bereft of even the normal amenities of one's life. Those were the very hard days of the Tapas of Sivanandaji, when he used to utilise the inside portion of used envelopes or margins of old newspapers thrown on roadside for embodying his immortal message to humanity. This saint of such rigorous self-discipline and austerity, Paramananda served, and served with unabated energy, enthusiasm and tireless fervour.

Swami Paramananda was with Gurudev from his remote Swarga Ashram days and was the pioneering Executive of the Divine Life

Society during the days of its inception. He was then the veritable right hand of Sri Gurudev and was the sole in-charge in those difficult days of the spade-work of the Institution which was just gaining ground as the would-be world renowned Organisation.

Swami Paramananda was responsible for the typing, proof-reading, printing and publishing of most of the early writings of Sri Gurudev. Swami Sivanandaji sent Paramananda to Madras to assist Mr. P .K. Vinayagam, Editor of the periodical 'My Magazine of India', in which a page was already being devoted to Swamiji's article 'Precepts for Practice', which Swamiji continued to contribute for more than two decades. Stationed in Madras, Paramananda got published many of Gurudev's works through the good offices of Mr. P.K. Vinayagam.

So hard-working and dedicated was Swami Paramananda that Sri Gurudev took him, as also Sri P.K. Vinayagam, as Trustees of the Divine Life Trust Society on its formation in 1936. Swami Paramananda was also nominated as the joint Secretary of the Society and he, in collaboration with Swami Swaroopananda, did superhuman services to Swami Sivanandaji and his Mission.

Referring to Swami Paramananda, Swami Venkatesananda writes:

"Matchless Guru-Bhakti (devotion to the Guru), an astounding dynamism, unflinching devotion to the cause he espouses, intense activity in the service of his Master, love and affection towards all who serve the cause, a great love for discipline and an innate capacity to maintain it, and selflessness to the absolute degree, selflessness that perfumes all the other virtues and strikes awe and evokes respect in all— that, in short, was Swami Paramanandaji Maharaj.

"Even a mere catalogue of the services rendered by Paramananda to the divine cause espoused by the Master would fill the pages of a large volume. Suffice it to say that when a holy wish arose in the Cosmic love-lake of Swami Sivanandaji's heart, it flooded Paramananda's entire being; when a word issued from Swami Sivanandaji's lips, Paramananda was ready with the response, 'It is done, Swamiji.' Thus were born the Divine Life Society, the Sivananda Publication League, the Sadhana Weeks, the Ashram, and the Divine Life Magazine, etc."

Swami Paramananda became the General Secretary of the Divine Life Society from 1939 to 1942.

In 1947 Swami Paramananda arranged to celebrate Sivanandaji's Birth Diamond Jubilee in an unprecedented manner. In 1950, he organised the Epochal All-India-Ceylon tour, from 9th September to 8th November, a task which none else could do. It was he, again, who left no stone unturned to see through the success of the 'World Parliament of Religions' held at the Headquarters of the Society in April, 1953. On 9th January, 1956, he set up the Sivananda Regalia, a marvellous exhibit of memorable articles associated with Gurudev from the earliest of days. While declaring open the 'Regalia', Gurudev paid the following tribute to Swami Paramananda: "Swami Paramananda has got original ideas. It was he who built the Bhajan Hall, collecting donations from people. It was he who started the Publication League. It was he who organised my All-India Tour. He was responsible for bringing out German and French translations of my books. He wrote to the publishers and induced them to take up the translations. He has spread my knowledge throughout the foreign countries. He is a very hard worker. He works the whole night." On 8th September, 1956 the grand 'Sivananda Mandir' was consecrated, with the beautiful marble statue of the Holy Master, which Paramananda got made from Madras.

Swami Paramananda was often called the 'Bismarck of the Ashram', meaning thereby that he was virtually the foundation, the basic structure of the edifice of the Divine Life Society, which he managed to maintain with all its strength and stability, by his sternness, precision and unparalleled devotion to Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. Many a time, Swami Paramananda used to say that there is no Ashram, there is no Divine Life Society, there is only Swami Sivananda; and Gurudev's word was gospel for him.

With many more achievements to his credit, that Great Soul attained Mahasamadhi at 6.30 p.m., on Monday, the 4th of December, 1972, at Sivananda Ashram. Paying his tribute to Swami Paramanandaji, revered Swami Chidanandaji said: "He has been to me a great inspiration and an exemplar on the path of true discipleship. To understand what implicit submission to the wishes of the Guru is, to learn what whole-souled dedication to the service of the Guru is, and to know what unswerving loyalty to the mission of the Guru is, you have to humbly observe this illustrious and seniormost disciple of that Great Master, Swami Sivananda."

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

DIVISION OF CREDIT

(Sri Swami Narayananandaji)

Swami Paramanandaji was in charge of the publications of Siva in the My Magazine (Madras) office in the year 1934. The editor of the My Magazine was helping Siva in his Divine Mission of spreading spiritual knowledge. The book Kundalini Yoga came out from press. The book had a very beautiful get-up. This filled Siva with joy and to encourage the workers he wrote the following letter to Swami Paramanandaji.

Siva has a wonderful method of extracting work from his assistants.

They will never grudge to work under him. They will never murmur. He wins their hearts by his pleasant manners and captivating love. He knows the science of mind-study and capturing the hearts of others. His words are sweet and kind.

The proprietor of the My Magazine has already published some books. He had invested a lot of money in publishing Siva's books. Siva wanted that more of his works should be published and the businessman should not feel the strain or take it as a burden.

Here is a magical balm to induce the publishers and Swami

Paramananda to jump with joy and bliss and continue the Divine Mission with redoubled vigour. He has a special art of extracting

work from his disciples. They would not feel it a burden but on the other hand will work most willingly and wholeheartedly.

The magical balm had its desired effect and the readers will presently

understand the clue of his success and how his balm works.

The following are his words:

Whatever it may be, we have done wonders during a short time, through the grace of the Lord. You have become a Jivanmukta by rendering assistance alone. No meditation or any further Sadhana is needed. Let us divide the credit now.

Swami Paramanandaji	33%
Sri Vinayagam	33%
Gita Press	5%
Sudarshan Press	2%
Star Press	7%
Swami Sivananda	19%
	100% E & O.E.

You will see from this allocation how selfless is Swamiji. He comes last in the list though the whole thing is due to him. In fact 90% or more of the credit should go to him. He gives the maximum credit to others. For a careful observer this chart reveals many things.

This had its desired effect and the publisher wrote to Siva for another manuscript for publication. Thus he moves the Divine Chariot, the Divine Life Society.

O friends! Come come! Take a plunge in this Divine Fountain! Take share of service from this Divine Source. Do not postpone! Do not repent!

MEET SWAMI SIVANANDA

Spiritual Powerhouse

Tourists from all over the world have admired the picturesque beauty of Rishikesh in the Himalayan valley where the most holy river Ganga makes a dramatic appearance on the scene, her limpid waters reflecting the rich verdure in which the surrounding hills are clothed.

Sivanandanagar set on a hill slope is the meeting place of the ancient and the modern, a theatre on which the prehistoric ages shake hands with the present scientific age. Within a few seconds you can reach out to the dense jungle where you can commune with Nature, alone with the Creator; the next minute may find you witnessing a movie-show or the magic of the printing press that turns out a volume a week.

Seekers after Truth have hungrily sought the spiritual manna that has its fountain-source here, and have looked forward to spending a few days at the Ashram. Younger ones find a rich field for their spiritual evolution no less than for the development of their hidden faculties, in the uptodate Institution, the Divine Life Society, that is the hub of world-wide activities for the spiritual uplift of mankind.

A Hearty Welcome

Ananda Kutir or the Abode of Bliss as it is appropriately named, welcomes you. To the frayed nerves of the city-dweller Sivanandashram offers soothing balm; and the inspiring view of the hills, the Ganga and the Swarg Ashram, the venue of Swami Sivananda's many austerities would cheer your heart and elevate your spirit. Cozy cottages are available for your stay. You can enjoy the holy company of the saintly souls—the Professors of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University—will clear your doubts, guide you, inspire you and serve you. You can attend

the worship at the Viswanatha Mandir or take part in the Akhanda Kirtan in the Bhajan Hall. The Yoga Museum is the only one of its

kind in the world; half an hour spent in studying its exhibits will enable you to learn more about Yoga and Vedanta than years of poring over texts.

Sage Sivananda welcomes you! Whether you are young or old, man or woman, and whatever be your caste, colour or religion, your real home is here where your true friend and greatest well-wisher, Sage Siva, lives to serve you and to lead you to your Goal. Here is the Message from the Swamiji: "Come, come. Walk in the footsteps of the great Saviours and saints of this world. Learn the lessons of Yoga and Vedanta and tear the veil of ignorance. You will cross this ocean of darkness and ignorance and attain the Light and Life everlasting."

Sivanandashram is the pride of Tehri-Garhwal District, nay the whole of India. Distinguished tourists from abroad are usually attracted to the Ashram; when political leaders and other high dignitaries of India tour Rishikesh and environs, they invariably pay a visit to the Ashram. The District authorities readily point to the Abode of Bliss as the most important place to visit in the whole region. Every few days some Indian or foreign notable visits the Ashram. Siva receives each with appropriate honour, affection and love.

The Peace-Maker

It is only the man-of-God with his divine personality, the saint with his heart filled with all-embracing love, the sage with a universal outlook who can really unite the world. It is he who is rooted in universal Atmahood or Selfhood (the realisation of the Unity of Existence or the Self of all creatures) who can radiate love and harmony and promote universal brotherhood.

Siva has not even once visited Europe or America. And yet he has large number of followers in those countries. The leaders of thought in both the hemispheres admire his mission and message. In him men of different professions find a common guide, and followers of different faiths find a common teacher.

Among the admirers of Sage Siva are men of international eminence, saints and Yogis. Only they who have a subtle vision and a spiritual insight into the essential nature of men and matters; only they to whom the welfare of humanity and peace of the world are dear; only they who are spiritual leaders of mankind and have themselves been working with their heart and soul for the spiritual uplift of the people—only they can truly understand Siva. Their estimation of his glory dazzles us and compels us to bow at the Sage's Feet in humble devotion and meek surrender.

Peace and Prosperity Through Prayer

The Viswanatha Mandir points to the truth that all forms are forms of the One Lord. There are many idols in this shrine established by one who is devoted to Formless All-pervading Absolute: Swami Sivananda, a Kevala Adwaitin. It is flanked on three sides by dense forest. Within it are the idols of Lord Ganesh, Lord Siva, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Mother Sita, Mother Parvati, Sri Lakshman, Sri Hanuman and Nandi. Regular worship is offered to the Lord thrice a day for the welfare of mankind and specially for the health and long life of devotees at their request. Pradosha Pooja is especially grand. Many whom physical ailment and mental dejection had driven to hopeless despair have regained health, hope, life and joy, from prayers conducted on their behalf at the shrine. Festivals such as the Durga Pooja are celebrated with great solemnity and devotion. And Siva sets an example by himself

participating in all such adoration of the Supreme Deity, whom the devotee approaches through innumerable names and forms.

Ideal Daily Routine

Swami Sivananda is the Life of Ananda Kutir or Sivanandanagar as it has since come to be known. He has transformed what was dense forest but two decades ago into a lovely ever-vibrant spiritual settlement; and he had effected an equally miraculous change in the hearts of millions all over the world who regard him as a universal shrine of blessedness and his Abode a place of pilgrimage.

The 1501 books that have flowed from Siva's pen are a commentary on his own life. His daily life is an illustration of the Yoga of Synthesis he preaches. "Get up at 4 a.m. and meditate in Brahmamuhurta. Take a brisk long walk. Pray for all while you take bath. Rely on your own self; depend not on servants. Even if you are a student of Vedanta, do not give up Saguna Upasana. Have several sittings of meditation a day. Spread the glory of the Lord's Name. Work, work: work is worship. This will purify your heart. Retire to a solitary place for Atma-Vichar (silent meditation). Be regular in your Svadhyaya (study of scriptures). Combine work and relaxation nicely."

Relaxation has a new meaning for Siva. "Change of work is rest.

Sankirtan will infuse new energy into you. You are never too old to learn new arts. Ere you take your food, offer it mentally to God. Eat a little; eat to live. Be prompt in doing your duties. Atithi Devo Bhava: Guest is God: receive your guests with respect and regard. Take delight in serving them with great affection and love. Treat your servants and subordinates as your equals; this will inspire them to sacrifice their life for you." These truths are illustrated by Siva's daily life. Siva's precepts to the world are backed up by his personal practice. When his work in

his Kutir is over, he goes to the Office punctually at the fixed hour. Among those who receive his daily attention are ladies, Sadhus, students, servants, Sadhaks, sick persons and the guests. With all of them he identifies himself. He is one with those who approach him, and thus he captures their heart.

'Om Namo Narayanaya'!—greets Siva as you enter his Kutir or Office to meet him.
Greeting thus, you would be doing Japa while doing your daily duties.

"Swamiji, I want your Upadesha," asks an aspirant. For just a second Siva is silent; and silently smiles. He turns and gazes at the aspirant; a gaze full of love and compassion. His instructions are few and simple, you can count them on your fingers. "Do Japa. Do Kirtan. Concentrate and meditate. Serve all. Love all. Adapt, adjust, accommodate. Enquire 'who am I?', know the Self and be free."

And the Sage is silent again. He makes you repeat the Lord's Name then and there and himself joins in the repetition, with eyes closed. If someone is silent, however, his finger would unerringly point to him: "Why are you shy to repeat God's Name? And you are not ashamed to shout at your servant or to bawl out in the Club?"

The Sage works like any of us; only he is more systematic, more punctual, more efficient and more sincere than all of us.

Neither ill-health nor bad weather can make him be a minute late in attending his office. An umbrella would shield him from the hot sun and rain: and a sofa would soothe the pain in the body from lumbago—but the all-important service to humanity must go on.
He delights to glance through the letters from aspirants; and that is proof positive of his delight in selfless service. His winning smile and love

compel obedience. Spiritual leaflets and holy Prasad are near at hand and would invariably accompany all his letters. Books worth several thousands are distributed every year. And yet, he finds time to keep an eye on the Society's accounts and finances, too. Recipients of big book- gift parcels would rejoice all the more if they watch him check the addresses on the parcels and laying them down with "Om Tat Sat": he feels that thus he hands them over to the devotee in person.

"Be thankful to the man who offers you an opportunity to serve the Lord in him," says Siva. You should watch him receive, entertain and instruct visitors, to realise what selfless service means.

The first thing: Siva presents the visitors with his books and journals. Oftentimes, it marks the turning point of the recipient's life. If the visitors are a good number, it is a Satsanga. And Sankirtan follows. If there are Sankirtanists in the party, they lead; but Siva himself invariably crowns the function with his own stirring Dhwanis and English philosophical songs. Prasad is distributed to all, and the visitors are entertained with tea, and light refreshments, too. If there are youths in the visiting group, Siva makes them do some Asanas and exercises.

It is a sight for gods to see: the devotees crowding round Siva, each eager to receive his blessings personally, and Siva 'meeting them half-way' eager to serve them, to cheer them with a kind word, to guide them with a simple Upadesha. Each party brings with it an intense programme-for-an-hour! and the Ashram buzzes with intense activity.

A well-regulated life with a systematic ideal daily routine into which have been nicely fitted the various elements of his Yoga of Synthesis, is the secret of Siva's glorious success, and is the basis of his teachings.

Secret of Health

"Sit in Padmasana for Japa and Dhyana (meditation). Bhujangasana tones the spine. Salabhasana is excellent as an abdominal massage. Dhanurasana enhances their value. Vajrasana helps digestion if practised for ten minutes after food. Practise a few trunk-twisting exercises, too. Padahasthasana will save you from constipation and a host of other ailments. Vigorous outdoor work will promote good health. Never forget Sirshasana, the King of all Asanas. Sarvangasana will bestow on you eternal youth. Cold bath invigorates. Play some games vigorously. Invent some special exercises suited to you: even old and fatty men can. Halasana has manifold benefits. Uddiyana-Nauli is a boon. Above all be regular." That is Siva's precept-by-practice. Do as much as you can comfortably do.

The citadel of secrecy has been blasted by Siva's compassionate pen. Siva has thrown open the doors of the mansion of Yoga and Vedanta to one and all. irrespective of caste, creed and colour, age or sex.

Mysteriously guided by his divine presence near them, men and women all over the world have practised Asanas, Pranayama and meditation, and achieved phenomenal success. Siva has guided them by post, too. In Europe, England, America, Australia and other countries, Siva's disciples have practised and progressed wonderfully in Yoga. Siva's books and letters are their guide. Yoga Asanas and Pranayamas aim at invigorating the ductless vital glands which promote health and strength. They keep the spine elastic and the abdomen under control thus ensuring perennial youth and disease-free constitution. The prime purpose of Yoga Exercises is to purify and steady the nerves and harmonise the entire physical and Pranic systems. Therefore they prepare the Sadhakas (students) for advanced Yoga-practice, viz., meditation and Samadhi.

The Supreme Yajna

Service is Siva's life-breath. Before he became a monk, he was Dr. P. V. Kuppuswami, a physician whose healing hand had brought health, solace and joy to thousands in India and in far-off Malaya, too. "Serve the sick. Nurse the ailing Narayana. Feel you are shampooing the Lord's Feet; you will attain quick Chitta Suddhi or purification of heart. This is the open door to Immortality," says Siva.

Service of the sick is the greatest form of worship. Atma-Jnana dawns by itself in such a heart filled with compassion and a spirit of selfless service,—this is truly the kernel of Siva's Upadesha. "God walks in the garb of a beggar. He moans in pain in the guise of the sick. Open your eyes. See Him in all. Serve all. Love all. You need not advertise that you are a Brahma Jnani. If you have purified your heart through selfless service, the sweet aroma of Wisdom will waft itself around you," says Siva. His yardstick for gauging one's depth of Realisation is not disputation or discoursing, but selfless service. A saint, according to Siva, is one who "runs to the aid" of the suffering and the sick. The Sivananda Charitable Hospital at Ananda Kutir is a living monument to this dynamic Yoga. People in the hills who were suffering agony in silence could alone realise the benefits derived from the Drishti-dana Yajna and the Women's Medical Relief Camps at the Hospital.

Secret of Karma Yoga

No work is profane. All work is sacred. It is the purity of motive and the absence of selfish interest that count. Whether you are a printing-machine-man, book-binder, despatcher, salesman or a mere packer or a cook: through that very work you can evolve and attain Self-realisation. Combine prayer and work; and treat work as prayer! That is Siva's dynamic Yoga. And he illustrates it with the deep interest he evinces in all the departments of the Ashram work.

It is not all work and no prayer that constitutes Siva's teaching; but a combination and a beautiful blending of the two. Siva is Sankirtan. No one, inmate or visitor, monk or layman, can escape singing the Lord's Names at the Ashram Satsanga. If you are a neophyte, Siva is ready to teach you!

The Yajna that is dearest to Siva's heart is the Japa-Yajna or Sankirtan-Yajna. Prabhat Pheri (going around the town singing Sankirtan), Kirtan on the Ganga Bank, Kirtan wherever and whenever possible is Siva's delight.

Siva is a practical idealist. And, his joy in making people sing the Lord's Name is matched only by his joy in seeing hundreds and thousands being sumptuously fed. Those who have met him can't forget the joy that radiates from his face as he gives his Prasad.

Theory is the first step to practice. Siva takes particular delight in giving lessons in Yoga and Vedanta to earnest and sincere students. He has nicely combined all the essentials of Sadhana in the Ashram Satsanga.

"Be a child among children, a Jnani among wise men, a busy comrade among workers, a witness of the Lilas of Prakriti and a sage within the independent seclusion of your own heart."—And, there is hardly another person in the whole world who could do all this as efficiently and as unostentatiously as Siva does.

He teaches the children to sing the Lord's Name. He is fond of teaching the young. With him moving as a child among children, they very quickly and joyfully learn. He instructs the grown-ups in their duties. He electrifies vast audiences with his spell-binding oration. At the same time, he is ever ready to sweep the roads and demonstrate the dignity of labour to high officials and millionaires. Training in Karma Yoga is part of all.

When Siva sings during Sadhana Weeks: “Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivoham, Soham; Sat-chit-ananda Swaroopoham,” you know. he means it; and through all his intense activity runs this thread of Self-realisation.

Mass Spiritual Awakening

Training of aspirants is harmonious and all-sided. Congregational meditation and study of scriptures in the early morning are emphasised by Siva. Physical exercises should not be neglected, as they promote health and physical alertness. Siva recommends Surya-namaskar as an all-round exercise, tonic for the eye, and giver of life and health. And occasionally, Siva gives discourses on Yoga: and in them states the goal of life and the path to it in clear, unmistakable, forceful and soul- elevating terms. Siva invites School and College students to spend their vacation at Ananda Kutir and undergo special, intense, all-round spiritual training. Ladies have their own Satsanga at the Ashram guided by Siva. “Just as a bird cannot fly on one wing alone, society cannot flourish if only the men are spiritually trained. For national and universal prosperity, women too should tread the path of Yoga.” Siva takes a special interest in the spiritual welfare of children and women.

Sivananda Jayanti

On the 8th September 1887 was Siva born. And on the 8th September every year Siva is born afresh, aglow with all spiritual splendour and divine glory, in the hearts of millions all over the world. It is not revelry that marks the Sivananda Jayanti (Birthday celebrations) either at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society or at the thousand centres where the birthday of the apostle of Sadhana and service is celebrated. It has come to be a day on which the disciples of the Master re-dedicate themselves to a life of Truth, love and purity, aspiration, meditation and renunciation.

Simultaneously at innumerable centres at home and abroad, in private houses and public shrines, individual and congregational prayers are offered for the peace of world, prosperity of mankind, and divine grace to descend on all. On the Jayanti day, people from all over India congregate at the Abode of Bliss to receive the blessings of the Sage in person. The disciples meet the Master; and their hearts melt into his; and a divine communion is effected; it needs to be experienced to understand the profound relation between the Guru and Sishya.

The aspirant pours out his heart in humble adoration of the saint. Siva showers his blessings on all. The Divine Life Society utilises the golden opportunity to institute an intense programme of Sadhana and Satsanga, thus serving the visiting Sadhakas with rich spiritual food.

Rishikesh puts on a festive appearance. At the Ashram thousands of Sadhus and poor are fed. Professors of the Yoga Vedanta Forest University and senior Mahatmas of Rishikesh discourse upon the life and teachings of Siva and the essentials of the Divine Life; the invariable crowning feature of the celebration is Siva's own peroration that stirs the hearts of the listeners and keeps their souls "awake" for ever afterwards.

Christening to Renunciation

He who desires prosperity should worship the knower of the Self—says the Upanishad. Nowadays it is a common sight at the Abode of Bliss to witness mass as well as individual Pada Puja. Siva, who stoutly refused to accept such worship three years ago, had to yield to the devotees' will; but not without significant modification! For, as the devotee worships the Guru, the Guru too bows to the devotee. They see God in each other. Through such an egoless personality flows divine grace in abundance. Mantra Diksha invariably follows Pada Puja, though it is

given independent of Pada Puja. Initiation into the Holy Order of Sannyasa is given by Siva to deserving aspirants on half a dozen important occasions in the year.

All selfless acts are holy. The Sage gives the transforming touch to even a simple rite and it becomes a meaningful divine ceremony. And Siva immensely rejoices when 'thirsting aspirants' sit round the Homa and recite the soul-purifying Vedic Mantras during the Mundan Ceremony, Namakarana and Aksharabhyasa. Siva attends to wedding ceremonies too and blesses the couple. The presence of a Jnani lends divine glory to such rituals that belong to the Karma Kanda.

Epoch-Making Events

The two epoch-making events in Siva's life are (1) his All-India-Ceylon tour, and (2) The World Parliament of Religions. Who says that Religion is dying from the face of Bharatavarsha? Siva's Tour is a conclusive proof that it is very much alive in this glorious land of sages and saints. Wherever Siva went, an ocean of human heads rose around him, and he swam in the people's love and spiritual aspiration. The people knew their spiritual leader. The leader knew what the people needed! In thrilling, simple, direct, soul-forceful language Siva addresses them: "A motor-car, a bungalow and a Bank account are your highest ambition. Remember, you will not get Eternal Bliss in those. Yo vai Bhuma Tat Sukham—the Infinite alone is Bliss. The Viveki Purusha will treat the whole universe as straw. What a glorious life opens out before you: serve, love, meditate, realise. Attain Atma-Sakshatkara here and now. Sow the seed of spirituality when you are young. O Ram! There is no cause for grief or weeping. Thou art ever free. Tat Tvam Asi—Thou art That. Identify not with this perishable body, subject to pleasure and pain. Keep your body healthy, mind pure, heart compassionate, and soul enlightened. Thus would you enjoy Bliss and bring world peace."

Under the towering personality of Siva the Parliament of Religions was conducted in April 1953. The delegates who came from different countries representing various religious Organisations learnt the all-important practical lessons from Siva's every action. The genuine humility that characterised his behaviour, the enthusiasm for selfless service with which, he was bubbling, the patience he displayed, the peace and bliss that radiated from him, and above all, his emphasis on 'practice'—gave the delegates a new outlook upon spiritual propaganda.

Divine Life Mission

Siva is the soul of the Divine Life Mission. But today it is not his sole concern. He has inspired hundreds all over India and abroad to dedicate their lives to the noble, divine cause. They have rallied under Siva's Banner of Divine Life and have marched forward to their goal which is their own spiritual evolution and human-weal together. "By leading a Divine Life and working for the uplift of humanity, you would be indeed laying a brick in building up the glorious monument of Bharatian culture, our heritage of universal peace and well-being," says Siva.

Blessed are they that have come in contact with Siva in this life and have received his blessings. Twice blessed are they that follow Siva's precepts and practise Sadhana. Thrice blessed are they that have renounced the world and become part and parcel of his Divine Life Mission. Hundreds have been initiated by Siva into the Holy Order of Sannyasa. Some of them live with him and serve him at the Headquarters; many others tour the country and spread his message among the people. Some are encouraged in spending their time in seclusion for deep silent Sadhana. When they make good progress, they are asked to come to the plains and work for the spiritual good of mankind.

Siva's Adhyatmic Army is a potent divine force that works ceaselessly and untiringly to spread his gospel of love, unity and peace, in order to bring about world brotherhood, harmony among nations, and loving understanding among the followers of various religions. The Adhyatmic Army is the pride of the nation and the world at large. Siva says: "Hearken! the clarion call has sounded. Gird up the loins. Strive. Endeavour. Purify. Control the mind and senses. Meditate and reach the abode of Bliss Immortal."

Over three hundred Branches of the Divine Life Society spread out throughout the world act as spiritual re-diffusion centres. They receive the Divine Light from the fountain-source, Siva, and radiate in their respective spheres, bringing health, life, light and joy to one and all. They are the shrines of Divine Life at which the devout gather to regain their lost heritage—Self-realisation—and at which the spiritually blind regain their eye-sight, and the spiritually lame, limping Sadhaka, gets new vigour and strength to march forward to the goal. These centres transform human nature into Divine Nature through Satsanga, study, prayer, Japa, Kirtan, and Spiritual Conferences.

The Modern Messiah

The Universal Nature of Siva's Message knows no barrier of caste, creed, colour, nationality or sex. His broad based teachings appeal to people of all races and religions, who look to him for practical guidance. Siva's Upadesha makes every man a Superman, every woman an ideal woman, a Hindu a true Hindu, a Muslim an exemplary Muslim, and a Christian a real follower of the Christ.

Siva is a powerful Divine Magnet. He attracts to himself people of every calling and profession who have or are likely to have even the remotest affinity to him. Sankirtan is the very life-breath of Siva. No wonder,

then, that Sankirtanists and musicians love to visit his Ashram and sing in his holy presence. He is a Master of the Stage: dramatists find in him one who understands their role and inspires them. Siva likes to listen to Hari Kathas: those who do Hari Kathas find in him an eager listener and sincere admirer. This great connoisseur of art draws to himself and wins the hearts of great artists, musicians, dramatists and poets. Spiritual instruction through song and the stage has been Siva's speciality. His inspiring philosophical songs have been heard by millions in India and Ceylon during his all-India-Ceylon Tour, never to be forgotten. During all festive occasions at the Ashram when people foregather, some Play or other is staged to serve as the crowning glory of the celebrations. Siva himself takes an enthusiastic part and explains that the Drama enables the spiritual truths to be indelibly impressed on the minds of the Sadhakas witnessing it.

See God in all. One God dwells in all creatures; one Life animate all beings. This is Siva's dynamic Advaita.

The cow is worshipped by Siva; our dumb brethren cannot have a greater friend than Siva. The monkeys of the locality are the happiest in the world. They get their regular food daily from the Ashram. They have understood him so thoroughly that they recognise the Ashramites as their comrades! They are fearless and no one need fear them either. The beasts of the forest, too, realise that they can roam freely about the Ashram, and that they would not be harmed. Siva would not allow a snake or a scorpion to be killed or a mosquito or bug to be crushed.

Siva's Advaita is a practical equal vision. Feed the cobra with milk, monkey with gram, and the cow with grass; you can't interchange their food in the name of Advaita. But, you can't injure any of them: here they are all equal. By all means avoid going near a monkey and do

Pradakshina of a cow: but you should not throw a stone at either—that is practical Advaita.

NOVEL METHODS OF SPIRITUAL TRAINING

THE REAL CHARM IN SIVANANDAJI

A Complete Enigma

The scriptures demand Viveka, Vairagya, Shad-Sampat and Mumukshutva for all students as preliminary qualifications for treading the spiritual path. Such Uttama Adhikaris who have purified their heart by selfless service to mankind, who have controlled their senses and mind, and who possess all divine qualities are directed to approach a Brahma Nishta Guru. Students are puzzled. With the above qualifications alone a man can easily attain the Goal of life. Indeed a Guru's help is needed more for developing the above qualifications.

Another important difficulty comes for students in the selection of a Guru. How to find out whether a particular man is a Brahma Nishta or not? Where is the necessity for a Brahma Nishta to come down to a lower plane to lift the masses when he is absorbed in Brahmic Bliss? Usually such Brahma Nishta persons are not easily accessible. There is no world for them. It is also a fact that all realised persons cannot work for the uplift of humanity. A few persons with special capacities and gifts from the Lord only can shoulder the difficult task of guiding the world on right lines.

A Big Problem

Students are expected to run to Gurus wet with Bhakti with fruits in hand. They are asked to serve the Master with Sraddha and Bhakti. Thousands are anxiously waiting to lead a spiritual life if there is any Guru to entertain genuine interest and care for the spiritual progress of the Sadhakas. The biggest problem is to have a proper field with all facilities for evolution. The students also should have the bare

necessities of life, to become free from worries about ordinary things. Then alone will it be possible for them to plunge themselves in Sadhana and express their devotion. They will get a new life if they are convinced that they have a responsible person to care for them, not only for their spiritual growth but also for their bodily needs. Such an atmosphere alone can give an impetus to the students to take to the spiritual path.

This is a tremendous task for any realised Guru, particularly when all students have their own ways. If the students are carried away by their own selfish interests, whims and fancies, who will come forward to look after their needs? They should unreservedly give a chance to the Master to mould their lives.

Those sincere Sadhakas who seriously ponder over the above difficulties can grasp the yeoman service rendered by Swami Sivananda during the last two decades. He is not satisfied with his own spiritual Bliss. He finds his real bliss and Brahma Nishta by working hard for the peace and happiness and prosperity of all. He wants to share with others whatever he has, material and spiritual. During the All-India-Ceylon Tour in 1950, Swami Sivananda declared: "I should go from door to door throughout the world and bring peace and happiness to millions through Prayers." He found the Tourist Saloon, comfortable cars and organised public meetings were "obstacles" and "limitations" to the Divine Mission.

Way to Bliss

He never considers people as "untrained, undeserving, raw, inexperienced and unqualified." For him the worst kind of sinners, rogues and perfectly worldly-minded persons are highly fitted to tread the spiritual path. He says: "Qualifications will come by themselves the moment Sadhakas resolve to leave the perishable sensual objects. God gives wonderful opportunities for the man who is sincere and earnest.

The thorny spiritual path becomes smooth and rosy. All obstacles are removed by God's Grace. Riddhis and Devas anxiously wait to serve such students."

A Real Service

Not by force or any kind of rigid discipline Swami Sivananda tries to bring about a change in the students; but by his charming look, tender care with sympathy and mercy. He teaches people neither by arguments nor by discussion, but he allows them to learn from his own daily life. He looks to the good in all and worries not about the defects or evils. This one quality in Swami Sivananda gives strength to all aspirants to approach him freely and closely. He carefully watches the ways and movements of the students; and gives them ample chances to give up their evil habits by suggesting suitable methods. He believes in gradual evolution and says: "Let the evil be there. Plunge yourself in Sadhana. All defects will vanish."

A visitor remarked: "The man is known by the company he keeps. So the Society's reputation depends on the high quality and attainments of the students, inmates, members and workers. Hence evil persons must be driven out." We have Sri Swami Sivanandaji's usual smile and ready answer: "Let perfected people and Mahatmas leave the Ashram and devote their time in Sadhana in seclusion and then come out to work in plains for the spiritual good of humanity. I will be doing a great service to the whole world by keeping evil persons by my side. They only need protection and guidance and control. I shall serve, guide and transform rogues. Let me help evil persons to come out of this quagmire of Samsara."

Implicit faith in all! New aspirants pour forth into the Ashram. Ample chances are given to all to remain peacefully and evolve. Even the most

important section of the work of the Society is entrusted to such new persons. Sri Swamiji says: “There would be some disorder and loss, but the man will grow. Put a sinner in the company of Mahatmas; he will become a saint. Trust a thief; he will become honest.” Many persons with selfish motives approached Sri Swami Sivananda and they were all turned to be very useful in a miraculous manner. What a tremendous patience is required to bring about good through this method of training!

Sri Swami Sivananda has no patience even to enquire about the particulars of the students as to their qualification, education and experiences, but is ready to give them his spiritual lessons for a quick spiritual progress. In a minute he can give Sannyasa to any one, old people, young persons, and ladies too. He never looks to their past or capacities. When we doubt: ‘suppose they go back’, Sivananda says: “My initiation will not go in vain. Even if they go back, my initiation will protect them from a lot of troubles and bring them peace in all circumstances and conditions. Company of Mahatmas, Satsanga classes in the Ashram, the atmosphere charged with powerful spiritual vibrations, a bath in the Holy Gangaji and the Pooja in Lord Viswanath Mandir will bring them good.”

Swami Sivananda leaves not the students by merely inspiring them with tempting expressions on the attainments of Yoga and Vedanta. He guides them in ethical perfection, shows an easy method of Sadhana, gives a plan for their life, removes all obstacles and troubles, affords proper facilities, comforts and conveniences. There are several thousands who have derived incalculable benefits through his prayers and mere correspondence alone. Real benefit and quick progress are obtained by those who permit him to mould their lives.

Mass Spiritual Uplift

The leaders of various religious organisations do not give proper scope for others to come up. Swami Sivananda works through other institutions and encourages all. In the last Parliament of Religions conducted at Ananda Kutir the leaders joined and gave their spiritual instructions and experiences to the public. For the first time in the history, a common platform was created by Swami Sivanandaji. All that he wants is mass spiritual uplift, peace and happiness to millions... let it be on any label. His attempts always are to destroy dissentions, differences among the religious bodies and he strives hard to establish unity and harmony everywhere.

Well-Organised Centre

The Ashram maintains highly advanced disciples of Sri Swami Sivananda, learned men, Mahatmas, sincere Sadhakas and many untrained persons also. Support is given to those who wish to live in seclusion or tour about for bringing spiritual good to the public. There are no regulations, rules and restrictions for the casual visitors or inmates of the Ashram. When compared with other institutions, one can find nowhere in the Ashram order or discipline. And yet Swami Sivanandaji calls this as the Well-Organised Method. During the last two decades with a handful of untrained hands Swami Sivananda has been working with his principles, aims and objects and method of work uninterrupted. He has established the Divine Life Society on broad principles with Branches in all parts of the world and trained thousands of students without having proper funds or able workers. Some workers due to ignorance disturbed the method in the past and in a mysterious manner the Swamiji turned the difficulties into stepping stones and brought tremendous progress in the growth of the activities of the Society.

We have heard of great men and saints who were made popular through their devoted and learned disciples and followers. In the case of Swami Sivananda, it is entirely different. He is making all disciples great by eulogising their capacities. He honours every aspirant and bows before even animals. He says: “Prostrate even before a donkey with the right mental attitude, Bhav. You can easily crush egoism and see the greatness in others. Destroy the fault-finding nature, Dosha Drishti.”

The real charm in Swami Sivananda is in the attitude he adopts towards various types of Sadhakas and the manner he adjusts and adapts himself to persons and circumstances. The people who have visited Ananda Kutir and stayed for a couple of hours have all great admiration about the Institution. A regular stream of people pours forth daily from all parts of the world. The world is proud to have a Spiritual Giant in our midst who has brought happiness, peace and prosperity to one and all through a novel method of training, suitable to the modern taste by establishing a dynamic centre where we find very learned men, Mahatmas and ordinary persons enthusiastically progressing in the spiritual Path. Long live Sivanandaji Maharaj!

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA—A COMPOSITE PERSONALITY

Swami Sivananda is not only a sage, Yogi, philosopher, author and orator, but also a poet, artist, humorist, singer and musician. His poems in English belong to a class of their own. He sings melodious songs in Hindi, Sanskrit and English with a charming celestial voice which must be heard to be believed.

As a child innocent and pleasing, as a friend cordial and sympathetic, as a doctor successful and benevolent, and above all as a Sannyasin noble and sublime, Swami Sivananda stands as a beacon-light amidst the billowing ocean of humanity.

The fertility of Swami Sivananda's brain, the lucidity of his expressions, the sweetness of his tone, the boldness of his spirit, the simplicity of his appearance, the affection in his voice, the magnanimity of his service, the popularity of his undying works, the glorious work at Ananda Kutir, the Forest University, the Ayurvedic Pharmacy, the Free Literature Department, Charitable Hospital and the School are all different shades of his unique personality. He is a dynamic personality of the present age, endowed with diverse faculties of the head and the heart. He is a man of practical wisdom capable of guiding the destinies of nations. His indomitable courage, iron tenacity of purpose and flawless character make him a great soul, unique in all respects. He is a most enchanting and arresting personality.

The Ashram

The Sivananda Ashram atmosphere breathes the idea of the essential unity of all religions. To be in Swami Sivananda's presence is in itself a blessing. The spiritual aura brings that wonderful peace and happiness which cannot be had elsewhere in the world. The Swami sheds wisdom, power and love to all who come within his aura.

The moment people enter the gates of Ananda Kutir, the headquarters of the worldwide Divine Life Society, and the seat of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, they entirely forget the differences of opinion, party feelings and miseries of the world. The Divine Atmosphere creates joy and thrill in all aspirants. The sacred environment where every ripple of the Ganga, every gush of the forest wind and the very soil of the Himalayas thrill one with ancient and modern Tapas is beyond description. The special attention of the Swamiji, his kind regards and uniform and artless courtesy bestowed on all visitors turn every man into a divine being. The visitors cherish with joy and gratitude the happy memory of (his) God-intoxication.

Sivananda's Religion

Swami Sivananda's religion of the heart, which he has significantly termed "Divine Life" is not the cave-dweller's concern, nor the monopoly of monks. It is for all. Swamiji tells each one of us how to transform our daily life into divine life and how through regular, fruitful, dynamic activity, everyone can expand the heart to infinite dimensions to enable it to hold and be filled with Divinity or Self-realisation, that is the goal of all.

To him religion is not mere meditation,—something dry and fairy, something which we may practise only in shrines and temples. To him religion is the daily demonstration of our spiritual belief from hour to hour, indeed from moment to moment, in our dealings with one and all, here and now, in this very work-a-day world. His attitude to life and the personal example he sets before all naturally satisfied the educated, the rationalist, the modern men and women in all of whom his sagely teachings and Yogic power evoke a sense of loving adoration.

Swami Sivananda has been a source of spiritual inspiration to millions of men and women in various countries irrespective of colour, creed and race. With a special knowledge of all religions, he talks on the essential unity of religions with convincing persuasiveness. He has scholarship which is happily combined with understanding; he wields a facile pen and possesses fiery eloquence to give expression to his views. His explanations of social and metaphysical problems and their solutions are clear and they carry conviction with all, even with those saturated with modern scientific education and materialistic culture. His constant endeavours in the field of dissemination of spiritual knowledge are the expressions of profound conviction that is rooted in his very soul that modern man can be saved only by an inner spiritual awakening, and that the realisation of the highest peace and happiness is possible only by ceaseless service of Man. His message is that 'Love of God is Service of Man.' This is for him not a mere theoretical concept to be preached but a matter of daily practice, every moment of everyone's life.

The Impressive Writings

There are no subjects in Hindu religion and Philosophy which the Swamiji has not expounded for the easy understanding of all. His writings are an indispensable guide to all those who tread the spiritual path.

The simple, fascinating, calm and forceful style of Swami Sivananda has brought about a wonderful change in the readers. He is that rare fusion of intellectual giant and spiritual angel. Many spiritual giants of India cannot be understood and so they cannot find response in the material world of the Occident: but Swami Sivananda writes with both spiritual depth and intellectual persuasion. He practices what he preaches, just what the country and the world need today. His teachings warm up the hearts of countless people and give them a new hope. He himself comes

down to the level of the Sadhaka and then gradually takes him up to the higher level. He finds out the aspiration of each and combines in himself the wisdom of a Jnani and the zest for assisting human beings at all psychological levels that is the hall-mark of a true selfless social leader (Karma Yogi).

The difficulties we feel in our day-to-day life, as well as in our spiritual practices, vanish when we turn to his hope-radiating precepts which are not at all irksome to follow. He does not advocate the orthodox tight-rope walking Sadhanas nor does he place before his disciples the proverbial 'razor's edge' to walk over. His genius lies in his discovery of the simple and the easy Path to the Supreme Goal, which anyone can tread, whichever walk of life he may choose.

Inspiring Teachings

Swami Sivananda does not advise his disciples and followers to entirely isolate themselves, for entering into Samadhi or Communion with Cod, but to immunise their mind to the earth-earthy currents of pleasure and pain, like and dislike. He advises them to go out into the world, live in society with a disciplined mind, and, above all, to serve their fellow-beings in a spirit of selfless, egoless and desireless worship of the all-pervading divinity.

The Divine Mission

Swamiji has himself illustrated the kind of service that they can render by his own epochal 'Dynamic Spiritual Awakening' Tour of India and Ceylon in 1950, when he thundered forth his stirring message of eternal wisdom throughout the length and breath of the land. The ocean of human heads that rose around him, the reverence with which Maharajahs and political chiefs greeted him, the devout veneration with which philosophers and leaders of the society welcomed him everywhere—in

short the spontaneous love and regard with which the whole nation rose as one man to welcome him, to worship him and to hear him, proved the glory of Self-realisation and dynamic sainthood, the thirst of mankind for the healing message of the Spirit, and the illimitable field that lay before Sannyasins and spiritual leaders to serve humanity. Millions in India had the opportunity of knowing the Himalayan Saint in person. From the highest to the lowest rungs of social and spiritual ladder, men, women and children all over the country thronged to see and hear the champion of social and spiritual service. His words were embedded in the heart of the listener; his gestures were enthralling; and innocent love- filled look and the flowing robe keep your thoughts engaged throughout. He is a powerful orator who can thrill and electrify the audience.

Undoubtedly, this power he has obtained through his highly manifest soul-force developed through the cultivation to a remarkable degree of the sterling qualities of head and heart, viz., spontaneous and unrestrained love, nobility, humility, patience and self-sacrifice. His unbounded love can be yours for the mere asking and his help and guidance you can command by showing the least inclination to tread the spiritual path. Swamiji shuns not the sinner; he loathes not the vicious; nor does he brush aside the criminal. For each he prays, to each he pays individual attention till a wholesome change in the personality is achieved.

Of no less significance has been Swami Sivananda's imperceptible service in the higher Spiritual Planes, where through his mysterious spiritual powers he has worked wonders and performed miracles transforming the very nature of men, shaping the very destinies of men and women, mysteriously freeing them from their material and spiritual woes, and showering upon them peace, plenty and prosperity.

Millions all over the world have discovered the object of their quest, in him; and they have all derived incalculable benefit in their physical, mental, moral and spiritual regeneration. The world is infinitely better today, for his services, than it would otherwise have been.

SEARCH AFTER TRUTH

The Spiritual Quest

Study of scriptures without the guidance of capable hands; Sadhana without the support of a realised Sat-Guru and the ritualistic worship in the temples—all became monotonous after some time. Japa, meditation and prayers without proper knowledge appeared to be an imaginary affair. Perhaps they depend more on suitable environments or the contact with a Higher Power—a man of spiritual attainments. Study of scriptures created a sort of spurious satisfaction and produced confusion in the end. Practice of Yogic exercises brought a series of physical troubles and many imaginary fears.

I myself could not discover what exactly was my taste or inclination for a particular Sadhana. For years it was all experiment, jumping from one to the other. It proved impossible to stick to one kind of Sadhana and to find a taste for 'meditation.' But the temptation was there to fly in the air, to acquire miraculous powers, to cure incurable diseases and to bring eye-sight to the blind, as professed in Yoga texts.

Swami Sivanandaji correctly says: "Learn Yoga from an advanced Yogi." This is the most reliable method, safest way. I approached the famous religious leaders and Mahants of world famous organisations. Even after years, no one was able to find out my taste. I had to blindly follow their instructions based on their own Sadhana. The "Who am I?" method has no influence on a beginner. Invariably all expected my service for hours but I found it to be a sheer waste of time and energy.

At this stage, the enchanting words of Sri Swami Sivananda such as "Powers of a Yogi—Drink the Nectar of Immortality—Marvellous spiritual vibrations of Rishikesh—Holy Ganga—Charming Himalayas—

Wonderful influence of the company of Mahatmas" and similar other phrases created a thrill in me and dragged me to Rishikesh. Quite good!

A Marvellous Place for Quick Evolution

Rishikesh is an attractive place indeed for leading a smooth, care-free life. Kali Kambliwala Kshetra, Punjab Sindh Kshetra, Ganga Kshetra and Nepali Kshetra provide enough quantity of food twice daily in Rishikesh and other surrounding places. In any of the Dharmasalas or Kutias the Mahatmas can live. The pilgrims who visit Rishikesh for Darshan of Mahatmas help the Sadhus with money, sweets, clothes and other requirements. Several thousands of Sadhus can live happily for years as boarding and lodging are provided free. There are hospitals to attend to the sick. There is no 'thermometer' to measure the spiritual progress of the Sadhus and Sannyasins and to find out a true Mahatma. So anyone with a coloured cloth can be considered a Mahatma and he is free to command boarding and lodging conveniences. On my arrival at Rishikesh, I saw a few thousands of Mahatmas with attractive coloured clothes and long gowns, some with Danda and Kamandal and some with well-combed, long beards. It required a great span of time to study them and learn something.

I repented. In my teen-age I was ignorant of the many fine facilities available to Mahatmas at Rishikesh. My precious youth till 20 was wasted in the busy world where the madding crowds struggle to eke out their existence, aspiring for spiritual attainments. With so much of comforts and conveniences, I sincerely wished to take to Yogic Practices.

The Myrobalam Sadhana

There was no one to put me on the right path or to check me when I commit mistakes or to take care of me. The real taste for Japa or

meditation was not in me. Again study, etc., appeared to be monotonous and the two recurring problems were: 'How to spend all 24 hours of the day? How many times to wander about here and there in search of saints?' To play with pebbles and monkeys also proved to be painful. Many persons were habituated to lead that sort of life on the Vedantic formula: 'Jagat Mithya'. A few advanced Mahatmas were aloof minding their own spiritual progress and so they did not show any genuine interest in training the students. They had no patience to mix with untrained persons. Some Sadhus occasionally gave discourses on scriptures in Sanskrit and Hindi. It was impossible for a Madrasi to understand them. The Mahatmas cared more for Uttama Adhikaris, with advanced knowledge in Sanskrit. Then I heard of a Yogi who could give Samadhi to students. That created a good temptation in me. I had to approach him through some paid agents who canvassed 'disciples'. That was a place for rich persons and Rajahs who were prepared to pay rich presents and fees to Guruji on the Initiation Day. Somehow I was lucky to get an approach to this Yogi. For attaining Yogic powers, I was instructed by the Yogi to eat Myrobalam in a prescribed manner for 90 days. I did not like the taste of Myrobalam and I could not succeed in gaining a faith in this Sadhana. People talked of a few Sadhus in jungles who lived on air and leaves. Wastage of time and energy was the only result of the aimless wanderings.

Even with all comforts and conveniences, boarding and lodging facilities, and honour and respect given to me as a Mahatma in coloured clothes, my plight was indescribable. My faith in Mahatmas and Gods slowly disappeared. I was reduced to seeking admission in a Mental Hospital. I thought that I was duped by Sivananda's tempting words: "Rishikesh is a marvellous place for quick spiritual evolution." Fired with a spirit of vengeance, I mustered courage to meet the Swamiji in

person and thought of explaining to him my mental state and also to advise him to go back to the world lest he should meet with my fate.

Sivananda in Swarga Ashram

The Swami was in a comfortable and spacious Kutia which was comparatively better and more attractive than those of others. An approach to his Kutia created in me repulsive thoughts because I felt, why a barbed wire fencing for a Mahatma's Kutia with a gate under look and key. And at the gate I found a board which read thus: "Interview for 5 minutes only—between 4 and 5 p.m." Though furious at this, I decided to meet him once. The consideration that he happened to be a Madrasi and a Sadhu knowing English, detained me at the gate and waste a few hours.

Swami Sivananda, a tall, very healthy, stalwart figure with a big over-coat and a heavy turban, came out and opened the compound gate. He gave me a seat. I was too nervous to begin the conversation. But the Swamiji was going on talking and asking me something. But my mind was preoccupied with the condition of the Kutia. In the compound, there was an attractive iron spring cot, one easy chair under a fine tree and a verandah for visitors' use. Inside the room, in a corner I saw a heap of dry breads, many bundles of papers, deal-wood boxes with a number of bottles and a few trunks with locks. In a plate he offered me some biscuits and almonds. I was made uneasy and felt agitated when I read the word: 'HUNTLEY' S' on the biscuit, and said to myself: "That is why he is so strong and healthy. Perhaps this is Yoga and renunciation". As the agitation was lasting in me over the interview board and the articles in the Kutia, I did not remember whatever the Swami spoke to me. At the end, I told him that I desired to stay for some days to get spiritual training. Immediately he came out with another key and

directed me to the next Kutia. I was left alone. There was a cot with one gunny bag filled with hay to be used as bed. With difficulty I passed that night. To spend time, I made Home acquaintances with some Mahatmas living near Sivananda's cottage. They did not speak much of the spiritual attainments of the Swamiji. Their only complaint was that he spoke and wrote books in English ignoring his mother-tongue, Sanskrit and Hindi. In Rishikesh too many Sadhus condemned him for this one defect, but they all had high admiration for, and respected, his character and purity. This gave me some satisfaction.

On the following day at about 11 a.m., the Swami came to my Kutia and guided me to the Kshetra for getting alms. He gave me no opportunity to talk. He did not know my mental restlessness. A few days passed on. When Sadhus go to the Kshetra, they keep a small kerchief for bread and a vessel for Dal, but the Swamiji used to carry 3 or 4 vessels. Later on I observed that they were for bringing milk and curd. While at Rishikesh I developed a habit to sleep for two hours after mid-day meals, because I had no work. One day at 2 p.m. when I woke up, I saw Swami Sivanandaji washing the vessels in the Ganga after his meals. Unable to discover the reason for his late meals, I decided to watch him the next day.

After leaving the Bhiksha in his Kutia, he went upto Lakshman jhula with the vessels, entering different Kutirs and at 2 o'clock returned for his meals. I could not understand anything. I patiently waited for days to talk to him.

One day I entered his Kutia. He welcomed me with great joy. In an indifferent mood, I asked him for spiritual instructions. He asked me: "Do you know how to do Namaskar to elders and Sadhus?" I felt shy. Then falling flat on the ground, he gave a practical demonstration for doing Namaskar. I felt as if the mighty Himalayas fell on the ground.

Then there was heavy downpour of fiery words: “Young aspirants are egoistic, arrogant and reckless. They do not know how to bend. They do not have control over senses. They foolishly aspire for Nirvana and Siddhis without proper preparation. Service, service, service to Mahatmas and the sick alone can efficiently purify the heart and bring rapid spiritual progress. Carry water from Kutia to Kutia and attend on the sick persons with Sraddha and Bhav. Shampoo the legs of the sick. Wash their clothes. Do you get up at 4 a.m.? How many Maalas of Japa you do daily? How many hours of Mauna you observe daily? Why do you laugh aloud and waste your energy and time in Guffaw? Where is time for Tamasha and joking? Do you maintain a daily spiritual Diary? Have you got ‘resolves’? Show me your daily routine and the way you spend the 24 hours.” I was dumb-founded. I stood like statue. I could not breathe. At the end, after doing Namaskar, I left the place and seriously thought over the questions. I wrote them on a piece of paper. The first thunder-storm from a Mahatma opened my eyes. I carefully awaited opportunities to watch him and learn more.

Strange Methods of Training

Swami Sivananda never came forward to teach anybody. Later I learnt that his method is to permit people to learn from his own life. I found that he went from Kutia to Kutia carrying curd and milk for serving the sick persons with his own hands and then took his meals late. He never relied on others. My joy was indescribable when he made a change in asking me to carry some medicines to a sick Mahatma. On some other day he sent me to Rishikesh bazaar to purchase paper. Once I had to go to the Railway Station for bringing a small parcel of leaflets for free distribution. Later, the Swamiji asked me to make some copies of his article for publication in Magazines. Here he wanted to test me whether I have omitted any words. He asked me to sit with him and compare the

article. That was all very pleasant in the beginning. Afterwards the work entrusted to me was enough to keep 100 persons busy, while he himself was terribly busy in attending to the minutest details. After some time the work was painful too, as he wanted everything with tremendous speed and perfection. In addition to this he asks his students to become 'watch-dogs' and look for opportunities to render more services. He receives people with joy, talks to them with great affection, attends to their needs unasked for, helps everyone without expecting anything in return, keeps himself busy throughout in doing good to others and encourages all aspirants without seeking whether they deserve or not. He carefully attends to all letters, verifies the addresses on packets and covers, reads the proofs and typed sheets, supplies the necessities of students and keeps a close watch over their spiritual progress. He individually attends to the sick students. In the middle of tremendous activities, he is very particular to see that not a single item of his own Sadhana consisting of Asanas, Pranayamas, Likhita Japa, Kirtan, prayers, meditation, study, is omitted. He has been maintaining this routine for the last 30 years. With great joy he says that service is 'my Dhyana and Samadhi'.

While sitting in his Kutia, he asks his students: "Whether the hurricane lantern in the visitor's Kutia contains oil; whether fruit juice has been given to the sick person; whether a bucket of water is kept in the guest's room." And it is a wonder to note that such items alone miss the attention of the students. Again he thunders: "Have you kept that article in the proper file? Have you despatched the books to Public Libraries?" There are over 200 students and visitors in the Ashram throughout the year and with everyone he has a lot of things to do. In the midst of multifarious activities, closely moving with different persons of varied temperaments, Swami Sivananda is ever blissful, playing with visitors,

inmates and children. In spite of the chronic lumbago, diabetes and diarrhoea, he is full of energy, enthusiasm and spirit. No one has ever seen a frown on his face or a harsh word. He bubbles with joy when he looks at a Sadhaka or a group of students or pilgrims and in a second organises a Satsanga with Kirtan and lectures. Instead of talking on high spiritual matters in Sanskrit to puzzle the students, he creates Siddhas easily through jokes, fun and humour. The students need not wait for years to get some secret Initiation. Swami Sivananda says: "Be good. Do good. Through selfless service purify your heart. Control the turbulent senses. Develop the power of concentration. Take bath in the Ganga and do Japa. This itself will do. You will evolve quickly."

A Model to the Modern World

A man who depended on Kshetra food, a few dry breads and a spoon of Dal is now surrounded by thousands to whom he provides all comforts and conveniences. Without giving any tempting hopes of Siddhis for aspirants, he lives a model life that is an example to the whole world. By remaining in a far off secluded place, he penetrates the hearts of all everywhere. Leaving aside hot debates and discussions, he fills everyone with a new hope for life. His charm is irresistible.

He never thought of 'plans' and 'schemes' for earning more to lead a luxurious life. With whatever he received from a few devotees for his personal use, he utilised in various ways for bringing spiritual and material benefits to many. He spends every bit of his energy in dispelling the ignorance of the masses through dissemination of knowledge, bringing peace, happiness and prosperity to millions through prayers, and showing the aspirants the right path that lead to a glorious spiritual life. By feeling oneness with all students and visitors, he trains them to work on similar lines.

By living an ideal dynamic life of service, sacrifice and spiritual enlightenment and also by representing most precious work of wisdom and light, Swami Sivananda has breathed a new vigorous life into Hinduism and blazed the glory of Indian Culture the world over.

A WEEK IN ANANDA KUTIR

A Series of Surprises in Sivanandashram

"The sufferings of the people around in this miserable world turned my mind towards the spiritual path. Soon I was able to have a number of friends who were religiously inclined. With a keen thirst for knowledge I turned to everyone. Everyone talked of one 'Swami Sivananda.' I visited many religious centres, temples and Ashrams in South India seeking the guidance of a Mahatma. All spoke very highly of Swami Sivananda. I approached Libraries and Book-stalls for good books. Everywhere I saw some of the books by Swami Sivananda on Yoga, Bhakti and Vedanta. I was surprised to see his photos in some Mandirs and hotels too," said Miss Sushila.

"I approached some of the religious organisations for getting training, expressed my earnestness and offered myself wholly for their Mission. I could not get any encouraging words from any of the leaders and founders. Too many rules, regulations and restrictions imposed by them, puzzled me. All doors were closed. With a disappointed heart, I wrote to Swami Sivananda. A prompt reply came: 'Thy kind line. You are fully endowed with good spiritual Samskaras. You are the fittest aspirant to tread the path of Yoga. I will guide you through post and take care of your spiritual progress. If you can conveniently manage, please visit this place and stay with me. Here the atmosphere is charged with spiritual vibrations. The charming Himalayas and the Holy Ganga and company of Mahatmas will inspire you. Cordial greetings.'

"For a disappointed and dejected mind, this letter itself was a real boon, a heaven. I had a feeling that I had reached the goal of my life. I felt the spiritual power transmitted through Sivananda's words. I noted the address: Ananda Kutir Post, Rishikesh, E.I. Railway Station, U.P.

Without losing a second I left my place. Throughout my journey I had the vision of the Swamiji, the sacred Ganga and the charming Himalayas. The long distance created fear; but I found it very easy, just a night's journey from Delhi. There was convenient bus service also from Delhi to Haridwar.

"At Rishikesh Station, the Tonga-walas were crying: 'Sivanandashram; Lakshmanjhula; Swarga Ashram'.

"From the Railway Station in half an hour I reached Ananda Kutir, a pleasant spot on the banks of the Ganga. The Secretary of the Divine Life Society, a bald-headed Sannyasi, made some pleasant enquiries. He offered me a place to stay and entertained me with tea, milk, biscuits and fruits, and informed me that Sivanandaji would come out of his Kutir at 10 a.m. And he added: 'Anyone can approach him. There is no restriction'.

"I could not see some of the Secretaries and Manager of the Ashram. And yet I felt quite at home. All the visitors too expressed that they were very comfortable and cheerful. How people anxiously await the arrival of Swami Sivananda from his Kutir!

"At every step I am facing surprises. I have closely watched the Ashram activities every minute to learn a lot. I have decided to spend a week in getting some training and to go back. The time has come. I met the tall, well-built, majestic form of Swami Sivanandaji. His countenance is charming. When I mentioned my name, be remembered my previous correspondence and immediately said: 'Next week on Guru Poornima Day, I will give Sannyasa to aspirants. You can take Sannyasa and stay with me.' Yet another surprise offer! I was dumb-founded. My feelings could not be explained.

A Miniature World

“Within a week’s time I should learn a lot from the Ashram and be prepared to enter the path of renunciation. In the Ashram, there are over 150 inmates and many visitors. I had my own idea about the seclusion in the Himalayas, the Tapasya, austerities and penances of Sadhus. For a week I silently observed things. To tell you the truth, the Ashram is in no way better than the busy world in miniature. It was a bigger world!

“All types of people stay here—men and women. I see a lot of visitors coming to the Ashram with family and children and getting all sorts of comforts and conveniences. Some of the students are frequently moving out to Delhi, Dehra Dun and other places. Some are planning for visit to Mount Kailas and Badrinath. I heard that a Sannyasi of this Ashram is touring in Far East.

“The Sivananda Publication League is busy in packing and sending out huge bundles of books to all parts of the world. The Ayurvedic Pharmacy is preparing herbal medicines for sales. In the Post Office run by the Divine Life Society, Sannyasis are busy in sorting several bundles of books and letters. In Viswanath Mandir, from morning four Mahatmas are chanting Vedic Hymns and prayers are offered for the good health and long life of devotees. An Ashram inmate gave a beautiful exposition of Yoga through pictures, wooden and clay models of the Yoga Museum.

“The Sivananda Art Studio is very rich with high-class costly cameras, Movie Films and Projectors. Throughout the day from morning 4 till night 10, I frequently heard the bell from different places calling for the temple Pooja, Yoga Asanas Class, Gita lectures, morning and evening Satsanga, morning and evening tea and meals etc. The day’s work is closed with Kirtan, Satsanga and distribution of Prasad at 10 in the night.

"A number of scattered buildings can be seen here and there. Sometimes 3 or 4 persons are expected to live in one small room. In every room I saw some students doing Japa, meditation, Kirtan, study or some kind of work of the Ashram. In some rooms, a few members are correcting the proofs, editing the Magazine or packing the periodicals for despatch. Some of the advanced students spend their time in attending to the office correspondence. A few can be seen attending on sick persons in the Allopathic, Homeopathic, Naturopathic Hospitals, supervising the construction work of new buildings. The visitors are also extremely busy in attending all the classes or helping the workers. No doubt I saw a few persons wasting their time in wandering about to Lakshman jhula and Rishikesh Bazaar or in playing with monkeys.

"Instead of learning something from Swami Sivanandaji, I was in a position to learn a lot from the Ashram by mere observation. I anxiously waited for the Guru Poornima Day for entering into the order of Sannyasa and then to get out of this huge Factory—Ananda Kutir—to any calm and quiet place.

"It was a blessed day. Young boys, old men and ladies too were there around Swami Sivanandaji performing the sacred Yajna 'Viraja Homa' and getting 'initiation'. From that moment, I felt a miraculous change in my life. There were some undeserving candidates in the group, but Sivanandaji liked them most, and said 'My initiation will not go in vain. Even if they are to go back, the initiation will protect them from a downfall and give them inner strength and wisdom and peace.'

Service As Sadhana

"I explained to Guru Maharaj how I was inclined to get out of this big factory life in Ananda Kutir and to move to a calm and quiet place. He said: 'This is the best field for a quick spiritual progress. Here you have

ample chances to move with various types of people. You can learn to adjust, adapt and bear insult. You can destroy all impurities through selfless service to burn vanity and attain Chitta Suddhi. By gradual practice, you will have perfect control of all senses and mind. Then only you will get immense inner spiritual power through meditation for a long time. A long stay in seclusion makes people Tamasic. The evil Vrittis of the mind are suppressed for the time being in a cave life and they manifest when opportunities are given. In a secluded place, you do not have chances for developing various divine qualities. When you advance in meditation, then a short period of seclusion may help a lot and again you will have to plunge yourself in serving mankind in some form or other. Have the ideal before you.'

"I was much impressed by the Upadesa. Instead of a week, I decided to spend the entire life at the Lotus Feet of Guru Maharaj. I realised that my life had just started. I was in a new world. Whenever I met Swami Sivanandaji, I received very good encouraging advices. He chalked out a plan for my life. It is a marvel to see how he has started hundreds of sections and departments of works to suit different tastes and temperaments. For people of various talents, he is creating new fields in the Ashram for their quick spiritual progress.

"As for the 'dark' side I found in the Ashram: Sivananda says: 'In no part of the world can you eliminate evil. You will have to live amidst evil persons. If you change your angle of vision you will be happy here or in any part of the world. You will have to make best use of the influences of wicked and malevolent spirits also for your spiritual progress. Let virtuous men be away and bring spiritual good to the world. May the evil persons stay with me. Even if a single person is elevated from this quagmire of Samsara by my books and advice, my efforts to serve Brahman in expression—humanity, the world at large,—

will be more than repaid. Through mistakes, a man grows. No one is an eternal rogue. If he is placed in good environments, he becomes a giant. I give ample opportunities for people to grow.'

"I was wonderstruck to find how he is performing miracles by turning people to the right direction and taking them to the Goal and bringing spiritual good to the entire world by his highly Inspiring Letters and Prayers. At every moment of his life, even the wicked can learn a lot, and become wise. In fact it is a wonder, the wicked and the undeserving receive his best attention."

May Sivananda live long and bring Peace, Happiness and Prosperity to the whole world!

SIVA'S MISSION

More than two and half decades ago, Sri Swami Sivanandaji severed at a single stroke the bonds that bound him to secular society and plunged into a period of silent seclusion and Sadhana. A magnificent man of multifarious activities turned into a meditative monk with his mind harnessed to the task of unravelling life's mysteries. His silence proved but a prolific fountain source of moral and spiritual awakening.

Swami Sivananda—a dynamic Yogi and a practical Vedantin—is ever intent on bringing about spiritual good to humanity, and the activities of the Divine Life Society demonstrate the different ways explored by him for bringing the world nearer to peace and happiness.

The influence of his writings, the magnetism of his saintly personality, the powerful vibrations of his voice thundering in fiery oration and raised in inspiring Kirtan and mighty good wishes have proved a veritable floodtide of moral and spiritual good to one and all who have come in contact with him directly or through his famous writings. The

serenity of his charming face, the grandeur of his personality, the beauty of his systematised life, the earnestness and care which he takes for the welfare and protection of aspirants and his untiring services to mankind attract people from all parts of the world. His wise, well-founded and pithy maxims govern thousands in their daily activities and serve as guiding principles throughout their life. He happens to be the only sage of modern age, who penetrated into the hearts of all types of peoples. His discourses and works on Yoga, Bhakti, Karma and Vedanta show the perfection he has attained. The revolution brought about by his valuable teachings is clearly felt by every individual.

Even if people do not have much fancy for the science of Yoga, Sri Swami Sivanandaji is assiduous in impressing upon them the value of ethical culture, so that they could lead a virtuous life and be highly useful to the world in some form or other. Through such selfless services which help them to attain purification, they are gradually able to grasp the value of the higher truths. Thus he has converted outright materialists who had no faith in religion, into spiritual fold, and shown them the way to march to the higher regions.

At a time when people have lost faith in religion owing to the false preachings of professional Pundits, priests and so-called Yogis, Sri Swamiji's forceful, simple lessons, giving real facts and pointing to easy means cleared the doubts of many and elevated them to higher stages in life.

Sri Swamiji Maharaj discerned the trend of modern times and attuned himself to the voice of the age and prepared his spiritual lessons in a novel way. The greatest gift to humanity is the Divine Life Society, founded by the Swamiji in 1936 which has now grown into a mighty tree, spreading its branches all over India and outside. Apart from the numerous publications of the Society in many languages, Indian and

foreign, the periodical functions organised during holidays and festivals, the mysterious influence of Lord Viswanath at the Temple of Ananda Kutir, the daily activities of Sri Swamiji and those of the inmates and visitors—are all worthy and deserving of a careful, detailed study.

May the Lord grant him a long lease of life, health and strength to enable him to bring peace, prosperity and happiness to every home.

SIVA'S TEACHINGS

The Motive for Starting a New Society

Sri Swami Sivanandaji lived in Swarga Ashram for a long period devoting his time in rigorous Sadhana. In those days when aspirants wanted permission to live with him receiving spiritual training, he used to write: "I do not make any disciple. I do not allow anyone to live by my side. I can only give spiritual instructions and the aspirants will have to practise in their own places. I live on Bhiksha. I cannot arrange boarding and lodging for anyone."

Now we find that the same Swamiji is the Guru for over 200 Sannyasi and Brahmachari disciples and thousands of aspirants in the world. A close study of Sri Swamiji's life reveals the object with which he is working.

His love for the aspirants is unbounded. Slowly, one by one, all sincere aspirants were drawn towards him because of the novel way in which he trains the students in the spiritual line. In those days the condition of Sadhus was pitiable. They all lived in a disorderly manner. Sri Swamiji Maharaj desired to reorganise the whole order for the benefit of the world and to make them useful for the world in a variety of ways. This, he thought, was possible only by training a band of students on proper lines. The desire to serve the world forced him to accept disciples. He took great care and troubles in moulding them and guiding them in the mysterious science. As there was no arrangement for boarding and lodging for many students, he had to keep them for some time and then send them to some other place to continue their Sadhana, thereby giving a chance for the new-comers.

If people persist to stay with him, he sanctions their request. After some time, he sends them away to other institutions to work wholeheartedly

for the benefit of the public. This clearly shows that he is not attached to any particular Society. His one object is to serve the world and help all aspirants and to bring peace and prosperity to all through various ways.

Though the Society was started by him, he is not attached to it under such a label as: “My Ashram, My Society. It should flourish.” He works through all purses, presses, Magazines, newspapers, Mutts, Societies and institutions. Whenever some aspirants apply for admission in Ananda Kutir, he writes: “Kindly join Aurobindo Ashram or Ramakrishna Mission. You will admirably grow. Do not leave the Ashram. Stick to it and serve wholeheartedly. You will prosper gloriously.”

He is completely unattached to the Society, Ashram and disciples, but those who are near and far away are extremely attached to him as the students should, and it appears that Sri Swamiji is attached to them all. His is not to perpetuate his name by starting a Society or Ashram in his name. Whatever little that comes, he utilises it for the benefit of the public. He believes that the seed sown for the Divine cause will grow more and more for the benefit of the world. He feels that the whole world is bound to work with him who finds his unity and oneness with all.

With a desire to make the Society eternal, Sri Swamiji has not approached any Raja or Maharaja or Zamindar with his appeal for funds, though he is acquainted. with many. He is not in favour of sending out appeals for funds and capital even for a good cause. He says: “Begging is highly deplorable.” For the sake of spiritual aspirants, to enable the public to evolve quickly in the spiritual path and develop all Sattvic qualities and to destroy all evil nature, he has shown an easy method suitable to all by starting the Divine Life Society and training men in the right direction. Now he desires that anyone can easily and quickly evolve in the spiritual path by service of humanity. He feels: “Earnest

aspirants will come forward by themselves to help the Divine cause. There is no need for me to go out and beg people for funds. When the honey is there, bees will come themselves. I need not send out invitation. I can serve the world even without money and men, in a variety of ways by remaining in my own small Kutir."

In the beginning of 1941, he left us all to an unknown place. And the public presumably thought that Sri Swamiji did not like the Society. Now they can clearly understand the truth of his Lila. He required some rest. As the transactions in the Bank and Postal Department were in his name, he left an authority letter with instructions to continue the work. Sri Swamiji Maharaj had trained himself to lead a very simple life and to undergo any amount of inconveniences. At Ananda Kutir, he never depended on anyone. These virtuous qualities of Sri Swamiji created a fear in the minds of young aspirants that he would not return, and made their condition worse. But they had hopes too that Sri Swamiji will not desert them, as he is full of mercy.

Strange is the way of saints and the methods they take to teach the students, sometimes by kind words, sometimes by harsh words. Sri Swamiji guided the members of the Society for several years and now he expects them to continue the sacred work for their own evolution. He wanted to teach the public that the Society is not different from him and that it is a training ground for all for spiritual progress. But remaining as a Sakshi of the activities of the Society, he wanted to devote his time to help the world on a higher field. Though it has been stated that Sri Swamiji has retired from all activities, we find him ever busy as before. We actually see that he has but retired from signing in

M.O. coupons, receipts and packing and despatching the publications of the Society.

Relationship Between Guru and Disciple

There is a general opinion among the public that Mahatmas do not accept or easily give Upadesha. With great hesitation they write to Sri Swamiji: “Kindly accept me as your disciple.” When they receive a reply: “I have accepted you as my beloved disciple,” they are wonderstruck. They take great joy in following Sri Swamiji’s easy lessons prescribed to their liking. Even though people would have approached him out of curiosity, now they have a mind to follow the lessons. When the aspirants show slackness in their Sadhana due to evil influences, they unexpectedly receive a letter from Sri Swamiji: “How is your Sadhana? The difficult period is over. The remaining portion is very easy. Be steady. Maya is powerful. Mind and senses will dupe you. Friends are your real enemies. Be ever vigilant and diligent.” Thus Sri Swamiji created a desire in those who have no taste at all for the spiritual path and guides them to the last by taking care of their progress and keeping a close watch.

Sri Swamiji Maharaj has given sufficient spiritual lessons through his various books for quick progress in the spiritual path. These lessons will guide anyone at every step. But there is a general faith in people that they should not take to spiritual practices without a Guru. So even sincere students hesitate to practise some of the simple lessons in Yoga. For such persons, Sri Swamiji writes: “I have accepted you as my disciple”. This gives great encouragement to the aspirants and they take to some kind of spiritual practices and make good progress with the help of Sri Swamiji’s lessons.

In ancient days disciples used to get initiation only after 10 or 12 years’ trial. The Gurus used to test the aspirants whether they were proper Adhikaris or not. At the very sight, Sri Swamiji is able to find out whether the students are fit for the spiritual path and the sincere

aspirants do get initiation in a moment. Some orthodox Sannyasis would suggest that Sri Swamiji should not give initiation so suddenly and that he should test them whether they are thieves or rogues. To such people, Sri Swamiji would give his prompt reply with a smile: “I am a Guru for the thieves and rogues. I want to mould them in proper way and to change their nature entirely and guide them in the spiritual path so that they may be useful to the world. Even if they happen to go back to the world due to poor spiritual Samskaras, the initiation itself will make them virtuous. If they do not succeed in Sadhana, the initiation will confer on them a good birth.” Then people used to admire Sri Swamiji’s large heart and high motive. Though there is no arrangement for boarding and lodging for many students, he will not refuse anyone. He wants everyone should gloriously prosper in the spiritual path.

As per the traditional rule, the disciples due to the extreme devotion to the master often approach Sri Swamiji to pay their respects. But he never allows anyone to touch his feet or shampoo his legs or at least to offer Sashtanga Namaskars. Before the disciples and admirers approach him, he is ready there with flowers to worship them and he immediately runs to arrange for their comfortable stay, food, etc. He takes great delight in serving them with his own hands.

He is not pleased when people address him as “Avatar, world teacher, Jagat Guru, Sat Guru.” He is highly pleased when he signs his letters as: “Thy humble Sevak.” He says that he is a cosmic servant. When people praise him, he says: “Bahut Accha. Badi Kripa,” and immediately adds: “Praise and censure are jugglery of Maya—mere vibration in ether.” He is not moved by praise or censure.

He is teaching aspirants not by regular classes, books or personal talks. He allows them to learn from his own daily actions and in the case of dull aspirants, he has his usual way of humour, wit, pun, Kirtan or

stories. Through every action of his, all can learn a lot which will guide them till the end of their life.

The ease-loving, fashionable people and lip-Vedantins will not appreciate Sri Swamiji's teachings. Sri Swamiji expects rigorous Sadhana at every moment with sincere exertion, faith and devotion. So we find only sincere students are highly attached to him. Those who require some pleasant philosophy to spend time nicely are satisfied with the big volumes, difficult original texts and commentaries that are available in the public libraries.

There are many Sannyasi and Brahmachari disciples apart from thousands of students throughout. People who come in contact with him through a few seconds' interview or a letter of a few lines, feel a new sort of happiness, joy and power in them. They are drawn towards him through a mysterious power. Everyone feels that Sri Swamiji loves him most. He has created this feeling in all.

The relationship established by Sri Swamiji with his Sannyasi and Brahmachari disciples is beyond expression. The inmates of Ananda Kutir are all well-trained in all directions. If they go out, they can get more comforts, conveniences, respect, honour, nice boarding and lodging. In Ananda Kutir the boarding and lodging arrangement is very poor. On certain occasions even if they are invited for feasts in other Ashrams, they do not like to go out even for a few hours. They do not feel at-home anywhere. The very company of Sri Swamiji Maharaj or Darshan at least once every day is real life for them. They do not wish to lose even a single opportunity. They wish to ever remain at his Lotus-Feet. Through a mysterious power he draws everyone towards him and confers Joy and Bliss on all.

The Method of All-Round Training

In olden days, the disciples had to wait for several years for learning the A.B.C. in the spiritual line. The Gurus hesitated even to clear some of the doubts of the aspirants. But here Sri Swamiji volunteers to give spiritual lessons and prescribes a routine for all aspirants according to their tastes and temperaments. He never likes to wait but desires that everything should be done now. Even in running trains when he travelled, he used to demonstrate Asanas to the passengers and teach them the method of concentration, meditation, Japa, etc. He cares not to revise his articles, matter for books or letters. The moment they come from his hands, they are dispatched. With a lot of mistakes all letters and articles are sent out. Sometimes letters are not signed in proper places even. When some mistakes are pointed out, he says: "I do not pay much attention to the beauty of the language and to follow the rules of grammar. Ideas are important. There is a peculiar power in my writings. To revise, correct and improve the language is a job for the scholars, Pundits and grammarians."

When a visitor comes to Rishikesh for simple sight-seeing, he comes to have Darshan of Sri Swamiji. He asks all such casual visitors also to stay at Ananda Kutir for a few days to learn his Kirtans, to study books, to take bath in the Ganga and to do several Maalas of Japa and meditation. When they leave Rishikesh, he asks them to continue the Sadhana and to send a report at the end of every month. In a short period he wants the students to learn to concentrate, meditate in a solitary cave for a long time, control the senses and mind, perfectly serve the world in some way or other and become a master in singing Kirtans, in demonstrating Yogic exercises and in delivering lectures. He wants perfection in all items. Apart from these, he expects the students to learn cooking, nursing, scavenging, typing, lecturing, writing articles on philosophy and he is ever ready to coach them in all these lines. For this section of work somehow he finds ample time in spite of his tight daily programme.

He has beautifully chalked out his daily routine and stuck to it tenaciously during the last several years. No additional work can upset his daily routine. Not a day passes off without his usual prayers, meditation, Asanas, Pranayamas, brisk evening walk, physical exercises, classes, Kirtan, Likhita Japa, attending to the sick, correspondence, study, writing articles for books and journals, bath, meals, sleep, etc. All items will be carried out at the appointed time. He asks even advanced students: "Don't give up your Sadhana thinking that you are a Jitendriya Yogi. Even if you become a Jivanmukta, you should continue your Sadhana. You must be very careful when you mix with worldly-minded persons. Downfall will come at any moment. Be cautious. Scrutinise your motive always."

Generally when aspirants get initiated, they feel that they are Mahatmas, far superior in position to Grihastis and that they should be adored and worshipped. Such curious ideas enter the mind of all Sadhus. It is Sri Swamiji who taught them to develop true humility. He taught them this virtue from his own daily life. He made all to bow before each other and to recognise the greatness in others and to see the Lord in all beings.

He found that those who live long in seclusion become Tamasic and lose their capacities. They take Tandra state for Samadhi and building castles in air as experiences in meditation. They have a natural hatred for the world and say that the world is 'Mithya.' Sri Swamiji Maharaj asks them to purify themselves thoroughly through the service of humanity before taking to complete seclusion and to awaken their hidden faculties. He teaches them to see the world as manifestation of the Lord; to feel Atman in stillness and to manifest the Atmic Glory in activity.

For a man of the world, Sri Swamiji suggests methods for material progress and prosperity also. He is well-versed in all branches of science. He never claims any Siddhis, but all aspirants are able to clearly

see extraordinary things happening or new experiences or rapid spiritual progress in the spiritual line or see the unexpected relief of some physical troubles in a mysterious manner when they receive a Japa Maala, Bhasma or a line from his hands.

For aspirants who have no control over the senses and lack in virtuous qualities, Sri Swamiji asks them to live in Satsanga. When they are free from evil nature by such contact, Sri Swamiji sends them to seclusion for deep meditation. If they happen to develop Tamasic nature, he prescribes selfless service in some form or other. If they make good progress in meditation, Sri Swamiji asks them not to come out of seclusion and gives instances of Lord Buddha and Jesus Christ. For people who have many ties in the world and poor spiritual Samskaras, he prescribes a course of easy Sadhana and asks them to remain in the world to free themselves from all responsibilities by saying: “The world is the best teacher.” For sincere aspirants, who have good spiritual Samskaras, though they may have some ties, Sri Swamiji directs them to take to the path of renunciation. For a great Mahatma who has made wonderful progress in seclusion, Sri Swamiji requests to come out to share his knowledge and experience with the people who are thirsting for spiritual knowledge. Thus he has thousands of plans suitable to all and so we do not find any wonder when we see all sorts of people of varied temperaments in East and West, claiming Sri Swamiji as their Guru and beacon-light.

Sri Swamiji has trained himself to lead a very simple life and expects strict control of the Indriyas and mind in all the aspirants for their quick spiritual progress. He says: “Without perfect control of the senses, you can do nothing in the spiritual line.” For the control of the senses, he prescribes various kinds of diet in Ananda Kutir. He says: “Control of tongue means control of all senses.” So we find saltless food and

sugarless milk or tea for the students on many days. To give strength to the mind and to keep up the system perfect, he shows a remedy: “If milk and ghee are not available, take a spoon of Dal more. Thus nicely adjust the diet. Don’t murmur when there is more or less of salt, sugar or chilly on a particular day.” This is the method how the students are trained in Ananda Kutir. When the visitors come for doing Sadhana, Sri Swamiji understands that they are not trained in such Sadhana and that their system would suffer if there is drastic change in food. So he runs to arrange for a delicious dish, comfortable stay, good fruits, milk and butter. This naturally creates an idea in them that Sannyasins lead a luxurious life at Rishikesh. But Sri Swamiji says: “Let them think in any way. I have my own methods. They should not torture the body in the name of Tapasya and suffer through a drastic change in their diet here.”

The title ‘Sri’ is confined to highly developed and realised souls or restricted to the old orthodox Pundits, Shastris, Brahmins or Mahatmas. It was Sri Swamiji Maharaj who used to address all classes of people with the title ‘Sri’ irrespective of religion, caste, age or sex from the very day he came to Rishikesh. He wishes that everyone should use this title and see the Divinity in all instead of the usual way of ‘Mister, Esquire’ etc. Due to his powerful will all those who came in contact with Sri Swamiji used this title while addressing others. The ministers and high Government Officials also preferred this title to all other titles and honours which were conferred on them by the Government. Instead of saying the usual ‘Good Morning,’ all the students of Sri Swamiji have taken to ‘Sri Ram, Jaya Ram’ or ‘Om Namo Narayanaya’, when they salute others. Though Sri Swamiji’s methods and ways are not relished in the beginning and appear to be contradictory to religious principles and customs, we find that his plans and procedure are becoming codes for the public.

The Necessity for Writing Many Books

In public libraries we find voluminous works on all religions in all languages. Earnest students are confused in ideas after a study of such big books. They enthusiastically read volumes after volumes and at the end if they close their eyes and reflect, they realise that they have not learnt anything which can be practised in everyday life.

So Sri Swamiji Maharaj finding the difficulty of aspirants took great trouble in writing a series of books on all branches of Yoga dealing with the practical side and an easy commentary suitable to the changing times on all original texts such as Gita, Upanishads, Ananda Lahari, Narada Bhakti Sutras, Brahma Sutras, etc.

We find highly useful practical lessons packed in all his small leaflets, pamphlets, big books and articles in all the journals. In every sentence there is something for us to learn and practise in everyday life. Throughout his teachings, we find nothing very difficult. He never indulges in highly intellectual subjects to create bewilderment among the people and thereby to show his great ability and command over the subject.

In all his writings, we find a combination of the different paths in Yoga. There are no water-tight compartments for him in Bhakti, Yoga, Vedanta. He deals with the most important portions of all sections of the schools of thought, to make the books very useful to all classes of people. So a perusal of any leaflet or a pamphlet or any paragraph of his articles will tempt anyone to follow the lessons. There is a peculiar charm and power in all his writings.

When a Bhakta reads a copy of his book on Bhakti Yoga, he gets some lessons for his daily practice in Bhakti Marga and an essence of Vedanta and Yoga that is needed for progress from the same book. Sri Swamiji

wants that Bhaktas should not divorce Vedanta or Yoga and that Vedantis should not neglect Bhakti or Yoga and worldly people should not ignore entirely any of these. His instructions are so universal in that even Muslims, Christians, Bhaktas, Yogis, Vedantis and all types of people come in direct touch with him for further guidance. While reading a particular portion of a book, all aspirants feel and experience: "Dear Swamiji has understood my real position, difficulty and capacity and given the right lesson suitable for me. He has particularly written this book for me."

The moment some new ideas come to Sri Swamiji which are highly helpful to all aspirants, he wants they should reach the aspirants without delay. So he has to write the same matter in all the letters, leaflets, books, newspapers and magazines in all languages. To make the lessons attractive and charming and to cater to the tastes, temperaments, and qualifications of the public, he gives the same lessons in simple stories and articles for the sake of ordinary people, in the form of Kirtans for the Bhaktas, in the form of illustrations, Drishtantas, dialogue and Drama for the sake of students, in high class philosophical article and poems for the intellectuals. In a short space of time he wants to bring Peace, Joy and spiritual glory to one and all.

Sri Swamiji contributes his lessons even to newspapers, magazines which deal with sex, love, science, politics, wit, humour, etc. Aspirants desire that these valuable lessons should be contributed only to religious high class journals. Sri Swamiji gives the pamphlets, leaflets, etc., even to atheists and to those who have no interest in the spiritual path. Many pass drastic remarks that Sri Swamiji casts pearls before swine and wastes the precious pamphlets in giving them to worthless and undeserving persons. Sri Swamiji's policy is entirely different. He desires to contribute his articles to all types of journals and to draw all

classes of people to the spiritual path. By reading a few lines of Sri Swamiji in such journals, many have opened their eyes and have taken to the spiritual practices. His writings are intended to create faith in God, in atheists and to help real aspirants to make further progress in the path of Yoga and to guide them until they reach the Highest stage.

Extraordinary Ability in All Directions

Swamiji Maharaj has adopted one uniform policy throughout his life, viz., to love all, to share with all, to give away his all, without caring for his own comforts and conveniences, without expecting anything in return, without considering the financial condition. Through Divine Grace, at the most appropriate time, he gets all that he wants for serving the public in a variety of ways and his requirements are supplied and wishes are fulfilled in mysterious manner.

His one motto is to help all and to make them happy, cheerful and blissful. He says: "I live to serve you all. I live to help you all to destroy ignorance. I live to make you all happy." Whenever people approach him for help, he never hesitates to see whether they are deserving or not. He helps them with all he can and, if needed, gives an introductory letter to some person whether he is known or not. Generally in the world, an introductory letter is given only to persons well-known. Sri Swamiji follows a different method. He writes in the letters: "My heart melts when I see people in distress. So I am sending him to you. Kindly help him with what you can." This letter changes the attitude and heart of the man to whom it is addressed even if he happens to be an atheist or a man of miserly nature. After reading a page or two of Sri Swamiji's books, he comes to Rishikesh to have further lessons from Sri Swamiji.

He is very miserly to himself. He is fond of using only the torn clothes after stitching them at many places. He takes great delight in sleeping on

a rough plank or to sit on a rough chair or a stone on the Ganga bank. He enjoys nicely the stale Roties. Though his admirers send him money for his personal use, he feels happy when he spends the entire amount in serving the Mahatmas, in nursing the sick and in giving aid to aspirants for their progress. He wants that every pie donated by sincere people should be utilised for the benefit of a large number of persons. For the great devotion that the disciples have for him, they nicely arrange his cot, easy chair, good delicious food in consideration of his health and age, whether Sri Swamiji uses them or not. When the visitors see so many things in his small Kutir, he is mistaken for a Babu Sannyasi, leading a luxurious life. The only luxurious item in his life is a latrine wherever he goes (in summer and winter he changes his residence from one Dharmasala to another). Sri Swamiji uses the flowers brought by his devotees for worshipping Mother Ganga. The sweets and fruits are distributed to the poor and young children. To satisfy the devotee if Sri Swamiji Maharaj takes a cup of milk or butter, his old friend diarrhoea pays a visit. If he takes a small portion of the sweets, the suppressed diabetes will show its cruel face and produce extreme weakness. In the midst of heavy work and terrible diseases such as diabetes, lumbago, diarrhoea, etc., we find him to be ever busy in doing all sorts of activities for the benefit of the world and he is the strongest and most cheerful.

Different types of devotees offer clothes, silk, food, according to their status and love. A visitor who belongs to the congress movement once asked him “Why do you wear foreign clothes?” Sri Swamiji told him: “For a Sadhu, a gunny bag, silk or cotton, whether Indian or foreign is all the same. I use with great joy the things given by sincere people.” At the end he changed the angle of vision of the visitor entirely by saying: “Wearing Khaddar alone is not a sign of true patriotism. Spin the thread of Viveka, weave the cloth of Santi, wear the Khaddar of Brahma Jnana and become a true patriot.”

The worries, anxieties, troubles, difficulties of aspirants are removed in a mysterious manner by Sri Swamiji. He uses various methods. His usual smile, wit and humour are quite sufficient to elevate the people who are before him. For those who are far away, he has his prayer, Bhasma or a short letter or a Japa Maala from his touch.

There are thousands of persons who correspond with Sri Swamiji. He clearly remembers the full addresses of all, the whole history and the kind of Sadhana of each person. He can clearly recognise, identify and recollect all particulars of a man whom he had seen several years before for a few seconds. The Slokas of Sri Sankaracharya, Gita, Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and other texts are always in his mind. Whenever required, he can bring out a particular passage.

Even though Sri Swamiji has many Sannyasi and Brahmachari disciples who have received training from Sri Swamiji directly in all directions, they have been able to pick up only one side of the activity. Each student represents a particular method of Sri Swamiji's work. It remains mystery still for the world how Sri Swamiji could achieve such perfection in all directions.

If you have a capacity for delivering lectures, you are prompted to proceed to America for collecting money through lectures. If you have a band of disciples, you wish to move from place to place as a Mandaleshwar. If you are inclined towards Sadhana, you naturally hate the world and take shelter in a cave in the Himalayas. If you are trained to live with a Kaupeena, you are puzzled when you look at a piece of silk. If you have a good command over your pen, you begin to exhaust all the books in all libraries for writing several volumes of your own. If you have a desire to serve humanity, you undoubtedly neglect the practical side of Sadhana and divine qualities, and open a big shop in a city for collecting money in the name of service of humanity. These are

the natural ways how people are driven in a particular direction in which they have capacity and ambition. It is quite easy to live in Gangotri and be ever absorbed in deep meditation, to do Tratak on the scorching sun and to stand on Sirshasana for days together. But it is extremely difficult to follow the methods of Sri Swamiji, in working in all directions and to live in a small Kutir in a secluded place, having capacity in all branches. Even in ancient days, the saints worked in one direction alone for which they were best suited and neglected other sides. So there is no wonder in the statement given by Mr. Harri Dikman: “How is it humanly possible for one man to have capacity and to work in all directions, to live in a cave and to penetrate into the hearts of people who are far away!” Sri Swamiji neither cares for the public applause nor ignores the world. He is working wonders and miracles without a title ‘Siddha’. He is firm in his determination that the world is Mithya, but lives in the world, serves all, seeing the invisible Presence in all forms.

APPROACHING THE GURU

Many a young aspirant who wishes to tread the path of spirituality, first does so with very many ideas—may be helpful or otherwise—and do not allow themselves to be moulded by the Guru. He forms variedly wrong notions as to what spirituality is. He thinks that spirituality is living in seclusion in an Himalayan cave or growing a beard and matted locks or roaming throughout the length and breadth of the land. Anyhow, he retains the individuality in thought and cannot hopefully surrender his ego at the Lotus-Feet of the Guru, which alone can see him well off in the spiritual path.

I, for one, first approached Swami Sivananda with a clean slate so that he might write on it all that he thinks will benefit me. I had no idea of my own. If Swamiji says, a trip to Badrinath or Mt. Kailas will help in realising the Lord, I will do it at once. As a matter of fact Sri Swamiji has never told me that, and I, too, have never visited those places. I remember, only once he asked me to get by heart the eighteen Mantras of Isavasyopanishad. I at once crammed it day and night with word for word meaning. The whole of it was at my fingers' ends, and I was in a position to repeat it in my dream also. But, somehow, I failed to recapitulate when Swamiji asked me to recite it. Let it be. Apart from that particular Upanishad, I have never by-hearted the Brahma Sutras, or the Gita or any other Upanishad; for, Swamiji has not asked me till now to get all those books by heart. Let him say that reading those books day and night will give me realisation. I will do it.

Here I can tell you one or two incidents in the life of some Sadhakas who went to do what Swamiji had not told them to do. In those days (1924-34) while Swamiji was living in Swargashram, there was a Sannyasi-disciple by name Swami V. Without the instructions of Swamiji he began to practise Hatha Yogic Kriyas. He was doing Vastra

Dhauti. He began to complain that Swamiji did not give him a bottle of ghee (clarified butter) while his throat was bruised owing to the Kriyas. He went on abusing Swamiji. Mind you, it was a time when Swamiji himself was living on Kshetra food (alms). Who asked the disciple to perform the Kriyas? Without procuring a bottle of ghee first, why should he start doing the Kriyas? Sivanandaji never asked him to do so. Had Swami V. surrendered his individuality to Swamiji, the latter would have guided him correctly: and put him on an easy path. This the disciple never cared to do. He has his own individual ideas about spirituality and never gave a chance to Swami Sivananda, his Guru, to mould him. And as a consequence he had to suffer for having followed a wrong path without being instructed by the Guru.

I remember, in those days, while at Swargashram, Sri Swamiji would have every possible minute and add it to his Sadhana. He would keep old roties (breads) in his room, dry them in the sun every day, and soak them in water an hour before his meal-time and this he would have for his meals along with some gud (jaggery). In this way, he was able to save more than an hour which he should have spent in going to Kshetra for Bhiksha (alms). This was Swamiji's food at a time when Swami

V. abused him for not supplying ghee.

Another instance; it happened recently. A young Sannyasin, a disciple of Swami Sivanandaji, met me at Madras. He related his miserable life at that moment. He came to South India to lead a Parivrajak-life after visiting Badrinath and other places in Uttarakhand. The first thing I asked of him was, whether he had taken Sri Swamiji's permission and whether Sri Swamiji had instructed him to undertake a Yatra (pilgrimage). To both questions, he replied 'no'. Further, he related how he slept on roadsides and railway platforms; how he met with physical violence for travelling without ticket and so on. Such was his miserable

life. Why should he suffer? The answer is simple: he did not take instruction from Swamiji and neither did he allow Swamiji to mould him. He gave full freedom to his individuality and, therefore, did reap the consequences thereof, suffering. To a further question he replied that he had no plans. I fully remember Sri Swamiji having remarked in a meeting at Colombo during the All India-Ceylon Tour (in 1950) the importance for chalking out a plan to guide us in our actions. I replied to that Sannyasin, that I had a well-chalked out plan confirmed by the Guru and so I do not suffer.

I can tell you with all assurance that I am the happiest man not only now when there is a kitchen to cater to all individual whims and tastes but I was also the happiest man when I had to receive Bhiksha from Nepali Kshetra, as also Sri Swamiji. It is because I had no individuality, no idea or plan of my own; I allowed myself to be moulded by Sri Swamiji.

There was one Swami Jagadeeswarananda with us whom Sri Swamiji trained as a good lecturer. Sri Swami Jagadeeswaranandaji's lectures on Concentration and Meditation were simply grand and eloquent.

Again here is Swami Narayanji. In those days he was sweeping the Ashram and keeping it clean. Today also he does the same work. He finds immense pleasure in it. He derives supreme happiness from that work. How is it? He had no idea of his own. He allowed Sri Swamiji to shape his career. Sri Swamiji, too, has made him a good Sankirtanist. Swami Narayanji has written a wonderful English commentary on Vivekachudamani.

You should not ignore highly evolved souls like Swami Narayanji and Swami Poornabodhji as some insignificant personalities. They are the happiest persons. You should resort to them often and often and learn from them in first-hand details how Sri Swamiji had trained them. They

are ever ready to serve you all with the nectarine instructions they received directly from Sri Swamiji while he was actively engaged in training the aspirants individually.

You may ask why Swamiji is not giving those instructions now.

Nowadays things are different. On one side the volume of work that draws his immediate attention has attained a colossal magnitude and on the other side none is willing to sacrifice his individuality to get himself properly established in the spiritual path and enjoy the Supreme Bliss. If today Swamiji asks a new aspirant to observe a fast, at once the other man thinks that Swamiji is making him weak by forcing starvation on him.

I shall now recollect certain instances which shall be of help to you all.

Once Swamiji introduced saltless diet on Saturdays. Some inmate-disciples did not like this and they used to keep ready with them, even an the previous day, small packets of powdered salt. Swamiji on learning about this incident abandoned giving this personal training to the inmates gave the instructions: “I have given you everything. I have shown you the path. If you have good aspirations, you will definitely adopt the correct measures; otherwise, if you are not sincere you may hardly evolve. I shall no more insist and force upon you all any instruction, however good it may be.” Such is the method of Swamiji Maharaj today. When you do not admit yourself humbly to get trained by Swamiji why should he forcibly train you? If he does so, you will begin to abuse him.

Early morning classes used to be conducted in the Ashram, when

Swamiji himself would go round every room at 4 a.m., stopping at every door and telling in sweet words, “It is Brahmamuhurta. Wake up!” on hearing his words, everyone will run to the morning meditation classes.

But now, aspirants are not so enthusiastic in attending the early morning classes. People do not want to get trained and face some hardships.

In this connection, I shall just tell you a humorous incident.

I was then (in 1934) put up in a room at Brahmanandashram. It was mid-winter. One day at 4 a.m. Swamiji came to my Kutia all the way from Ananda Kutir in that biting wintry morning, to wake me up. It was a distance of nearly half a mile. Peeping through the window he called "Maharaj! OM! Maharaj! OM!" Twice I got annoyed and replied, "Maharaj, Kya Chahiye" (What do you want)? I could not make out who was standing at the door (Swamiji, it seems, had his voice purposely changed). Again, "Maharaj! OM ..!" Now it was definitely his voice. I got up as though in a shock and Swamiji mildly said, "Maharaj, you are sleeping. It is Brahmamuhurta". I replied how the previous night I kept late hours busying myself with urgent work of the Ashram. Swamiji joyously remarked that when a sleeping man is disturbed he would lose his temper, but that I was very mild and sweet in my reply!

Such was the trouble he took in those days to collect the inmates for the morning class, in spite of the fact that Ananda Kutir had not grown up then, and therefore we had to lodge at different buildings, not close at hand. The inmates, then, had a keen desire to get their personalities moulded spiritually by Sri Swamiji Maharaj and they are all happy today. Now, too, if you all have a keen desire to surrender your individuality at the feet of the Guru, he will definitely come forward with his practical instructions.

Go to the Guru with a clean slate. Have no idea of your own. Let him write on it. Let him chalk out a plan for you. Allow him to mould you into a spiritual genius. This alone I consider as surrender unto the Lotus-Feet of the Guru.

Go to the Mahatmas. See who will guide you properly. When once you have selected your Guru, stand by him always with unswerving faith and devotion. Carry out all his instructions. Never allow your individual imaginations and ideas to play. This is the way to approach the Guru. This is self-surrender.

Do Not Hurt Others

It was in 1930 that I first met Swami Sivanandaji and in a couple of years I wrote a book under the pseudonym 'Ananda'. The book was published only two years later in 1934 at Madras. Now you will not be able to find any copy of the book, except two copies in the Sri Ramashram library, Munikireti. I myself do not know what happened to the rest of the copies.

In that book I wrote all about the relationship between the Guru and the disciple, how the disciple should conduct himself in the presence of the Guru and eversomany other items of practical importance to an aspirant just stepping into the spiritual path. In the very same book, I had also mentioned about the various Ashrams where I stayed before as well as about their different managers and presidents, while describing the unique nature of Swami Sivanandaji and his institution that kept me spellbound.

A copy of the book was duly sent to Swami Sivanandaji who wrote me back, 'Wonderful; excellent!' Within a short time, I made ready the manuscripts of the second volume of the book (the first book ended with the note that it is being continued in the second volume that awaits publication). All things were ready, press, paper, etc. All of a sudden, I received a letter from Sri Swamiji saying, in effect, 'Your book is very bad. Do not sell it to anybody. Do not even give it freely. Do not bring out the next volume.' I was thunderstruck. 'What? Only the other day

Swamiji wrote me appreciating the book and now he condemns it', I thought. From Madras, I wrote to Swamiji requesting him to enlighten me as to what he means. And here is the reply he favoured me with: 'Such and such a Mahatma writes your books is a frightful attack directly aimed at him and his institution. Your book offends my friend. It has injured him. Therefore stop sales as well as drop the second volume.'

Mark, how large is the heart! What an amount of gracious kindness! Swamiji liked the book very much. But because someone feels offended, the book should not be brought out. 'Do not offend any one. Do not hurt anybody's feelings': this is what Sri Swamiji preaches to everyone today. This is what I learned from him on that day.

I implicitly obeyed Sri Swamiji's wishes. The second volume was never brought out and the books already printed were never put for sales. And this was not at all difficult for me, nor was I affected. I am ever happy.

All this was because, I had no idea of my own, no plan of my own. Sri Swamiji puts the idea and chalks out the plan. I simply execute them. He moulds me and I allow him to do so.

How The Divine Life Society Was Born

Many are curious to know when Sri Swamiji wrote his first book and how he was able to establish his second-to-none Divine Life Society within a few years of his coming to Rishikesh.

The first book that was written and published by Swami Sivananda is his master-piece Practice of Yoga. The year was 1929. That, as all of you know, is an excellent book. I had the opportunity to see a 'de luxe' edition copy of the book at the Connemera Library in Madras. The book was priced as low as rupees two only. Even in those early days of

Sannyasa life, when it was very difficult for him to procure money, Sri Swamiji brought out costly editions of books for supplying free of charge to all public libraries and poor aspirants who would treasure them. For those of ordinary means there were cheap editions priced very low. Incidentally, it also happens to be the book that brought me so close to him. That much regarding his first book.

The Divine Life Society, if I can say, was virtually born the very moment Sri Swamiji stepped into Rishikesh, i.e., in 1923. What he started that day, he is still continuing now.

He would go to every Mahatma living around him, fetch them water from the Ganga, attend to their needs and serve them to their satisfaction without their asking. I have seen Sri Swamiji doing the very same thing even while at Swargashram (i.e., from 1930 onwards when I first met him). On one occasion when I stepped into his Kutia (hermitage) to attend to his need I remember Sri Swamiji asking me to serve all other Mahatmas washing their clothes, sweeping their Kutias and so on. On another occasion, he told me that I should always look out for opportunities to serve others in any capacity. He would insist on keeping a small handkerchief in our pockets so that we might clean the shoes of the Mahatmas and Yatris while they were at Satsanga without their knowledge. Such is his zeal and enthusiasm for serving the Virat Swaroopa (cosmic manifestation) of the Lord.

As he put into action his love for service in the year 1923, in Rishikesh, the seed for the Divine Life Society was sown. He watered it with the nectarine stream of cosmic love and selfless service and in the next year a tender plant sprouted forth and was christened ‘Satya Sevashram’, it was a charitable medical dispensary to cater to the needs of the ailing Mahatmas and pilgrims. It functioned as a mobile clinic also. This

happened (in 1926) after Sri Swamiji moved from Rishikesh to Lakshmanjhula.

Indeed the seed should have been a divine one; for, now the tender plant grew into a nice little tree when Sri Swamiji shifted his Kutia from Lakshmanjhula to Swargashram. That was somewhere in 1929. 'Satya Sevashram' paved the way for 'Swargashram Sadhu Sangha' but the former's motto remained the same, that is, practising cosmic love and selfless service.

All the time, even though Sri Swamiji was busying himself with writing books he was touring many places holding Satsanga and Sankirtan. All this formed part of the Society's work. The work was continued with renewed vigour and enthusiasm at every step. Swamiji travelled from Mount Kailas in Tibet, to Rameswaram in the southern tip of Deccan, and from Srinagar in Kashmir, to Gangasagar in the Bay of Bengal.

In the mean time, he had settled at the present site of Ananda Kutir (in 1934). After a while, in the year 1936, when the little tree of 'Swargashram Sadhu Sangha' has firmly rooted itself and grown into a full-sized tree it brought into existence the Divine Life Society. As you know it better now, this divine tree is every day shooting forth a new branch bringing into existence new centres of Divine Life, far and near. Every day, it bring forth immortal, unfading, pleasant-smelling flowers in the form of ideal selfless workers. And the fruits of this divine tree are but the immortal happiness.

And so, as you have seen, the Divine Life Society really came into existence in the year 1923, even though it assumed its present name in 1936.

A PEEP INTO ANANDA KUTIR

The Home for All Aspirants

Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati, Founder-President of the Divine Life Society, has by years of arduous work, created a new World—Ananda Kutir—for the quick spiritual progress of all types of seekers after Truth, suitable to various tastes, temperaments and stage of evolution. He may be a Brahmachari, Sannyasin or a Grihasti belonging to any school of thought, cult or religion; yet he can find his place in this World. A child, youth or an old man or a woman can have a free access to this Ashram. Ananda Kutir (commonly known as Sivanandashram) is two miles from Rishikesh Railway Station. Rishikesh is just a night's journey from Delhi on the Debra Dun line.

Comfortable Stay

The Ashram has quite a few buildings, but all the houses nearby are also rented for the use of the visitors. And yet sometimes 2 or 3 persons have to live in a room. Such is the great rush of pilgrims here throughout the year. Therefore it is advisable for you to inform the Secretary, Divine Life Society, Ananda Kutir Post, (U.P.)2 in advance about your visit to the Ashram; or on your arrival, meet the Secretary, and give him your name and address. Tell him the purpose of your visit and the period you wish to stay. This will help the Secretary to make necessary arrangements for your comfortable stay, boarding and lodging, and then to guide you throughout. The Ashram provides tea, coffee or milk at 7 a.m. and 3 p.m., and meals at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. After night Satsanga and at the end of Poojas in the Lord Viswanath Mandir, Prasad is distributed. There are plenty of opportunities for people to feel quite at home and to tread the spiritual path with all comforts and conveniences. The climate is very good here throughout the year. The winter is

supposed to be a bit cold during the months of November to March, but this is the finest period for Sadhana. Winter is very pleasant.

Various Fields for Evolution

In the early morning at 4, join the common prayer and meditation, and attend the Pooja in Lord Viswanath Mandir at 5 and 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. You can arrange a Special Pooja in your own name for your good health and long life. Daily at night from 8 p.m. you have the grand Satsanga with Bhajan, Sankirtan, lecture on Bhakti and Yoga and study of scriptures. Regular classes on Gita and Upanishads are conducted at 9 p.m. There are experts in charge of the sections of Yoga and physical culture to train candidates in Yogic exercises at 7 a.m. daily for maintaining a high standard of health and for removal of chronic diseases. Special courses: For the benefit of those who can spend a few weeks at the Ashram can undergo private courses on Yoga or Vedanta under the learned Professors of the Yoga Vedanta Forest University. You will derive incalculable benefits by attending the above classes.

The publications of Sri Swami Sivananda are kept in the office hall. Anyone can study these books or purchase them from the Sales Department. Japa Maalas of either Rudraksha or Tulasi are available for your Sadhana. Copies of the charming pictures of Swami Sivananda can also be had for sale.

The Bhajans and inspiring speeches of Sri Swamiji are recorded on Magnetic Tapes and Gramophone Records. Several thousands of feet of films with the daily activities of Swamiji and Yogic exercises are frequently screened. Consult the man in charge of Sivananda Art Studio and fix up a convenient time for the projection. The Gramophone Records are available for sale. A duplicate print of the films can be prepared and supplied.

Get All That You Want

You can have Darshan of Sri Swami Sivanandaji at 9 a.m. in the office where he attends to his correspondence work till 11 a.m. Tell him frankly all that you desire in a few words, as he has to attend to a lot of work in the Ashram. On Guru Poornima (August), Birthday (September) and Sivaratri (February) days deserving candidates get initiation into the Order of Brahmacharya and Sannyasa. Others get Mantra Diksha and perform Pada Pooja on any auspicious day or on all Thursdays.

Spiritual Uplift

The Secretary will take you around the Ashram and explain to you the Yoga Museum which contains many useful articles on Yoga and Religion. In the course of half an hour you can have a comprehensive study of the different aspects of Yoga through simple models, pictures and illustrations.

Intense spiritual training is given to aspirants during the Easter and Christmas Sadhana Weeks when hundreds of Sadhakas from all parts of the land undergo a systematic course of Sadhana under the direct guidance of Sri Swami Sivananda. Even during the Birthday celebrations from 1st to 8th September every year, many people visit the Ashram to join the daily Satsanga.

You have plenty of books to read on Bhakti, Yoga and Vedanta and periodicals such as “The Divine Life” Magazine, “Yoga-Vedanta Forest University Weekly”, “Health and Long Life” in English and “Divya Jivan” in Hindi.

Those who have physical ailments may consult the expert doctors in charge of the Allopathic Hospital, Ayurvedic Pharmacy, Sivananda Nature Cure Sanatorium, Homeopathic Dispensary or the famous and

infallible Namapathy school of Sivananda. Reliable patent drugs and tonics for brain and blood, such as Chyavanaprash, Shilajit, etc., are manufactured from genuine Himalayan herbs.

Dissemination of Knowledge

Several thousands of rupees worth of books are given away free by Sri Swami Sivananda to deserving Sadhakas, public Libraries and education Institutions. Aspirants the world over derive wonderful spiritual benefit through the valuable publications of the Society and the personal, inspiring letters of Swami Sivanandaji. What one can learn under a very learned Pundit or through the strenuous Sadhana for over 12 years, can be had in Ananda Kutir in a few days of spiritual training or through personal correspondence.

A Rare Privilege

Highly educated persons can devote their time in study, writing articles and getting training in delivering lectures. All aspirants can plunge themselves in any section of work and learn a lot of things. It is through work a man has the opportunity to come in close touch with Swami Sivanandaji and the Swamiji too has a chance to study the taste, temperament and aptitude of the students. This contact helps a quick spiritual training.

By steadily working in some sections the Sadhakas learn the art of concentration and control of senses. By such selfless service to the Society, the Sadhakas awaken the hidden faculties and they attain Chitta Suddhi. This is the real foundation for spiritual evolution. By mixing with different types of people, you learn the way to adjust and adapt to various persons and circumstances. This is the easy method to destroy all defects and develop divine qualities.

Sri Swamiji personally attends to all those who stay in the Ashram. Through kind words, mercy and excellent encouragement, he tries to bring rapid spiritual attainment to those who seek his guidance. For persons of introvert nature, facilities are provided to evolve through Sadhana in seclusion. For a Bhakta, the worship in the temple, Akhanda Kirtan and night Satsanga will prove to be a boon. The well-trained Sadhakas are advised to tour different parts of the land and to bring peace and happiness to millions. The visitors on their return to their places, establish Branches of the Divine Life Society and carry on similar activities for the benefit of the public.

Generous-hearted persons who can afford, construct Kutirs in the Ashram in their own name for their personal use or for the use of Sadhakas and Mahatmas. This is the highest form of charity in providing accommodation for performing Tapas on the banks of the Holy Ganga, with charming Himalayan sceneries. For dissemination of knowledge, the donors publish pamphlets and leaflets for free distribution through the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University Press.

Sri Swami Sivanandaji says: "To raise the fallen, to lead the blind, to share what I have with others, to bring solace to the afflicted, to cheer up the suffering, to love my neighbour as my own Self, to protect the cows, animals, women and children—these are my aims and ideals. I will help you and guide you. I live to serve you all. I live to make you all happy. This body is meant for service."

Sri Swami Sivananda is bubbling with joy and enthusiasm when he finds a chance to serve others. He creates various avenues and chances for service. May he live long to bring Peace and Prosperity to mankind! May we all come in closer touch with the Master with devotion and sincerity and attain the Goal of life easily and quickly!!

THE GURU ADAPTS HIMSELF TO THE DISCIPLE

Sri Swami Sivanandaji's method of training aspirants is unique. Everyone of the aspirants should sing the God's Names, study Gita and Upanishads, do selfless service, organise Branches of the Divine Life Society when he tours the country, and inspire many people by delivering thrilling lectures. He wants that everyone of his disciples should attain perfection in everything and be of the maximum possible use to humanity.

In Yoga there are the preliminary Sadhanas of Yama-Niyama. In Jnana Yoga or Vedanta Sadhana the seeker has to equip himself with the Sadhana-Chatushtaya. Unless you attain perfection in these, you cannot attain the Goal. And after attaining perfection in them, you will have to approach a Brahma-Nishtha Guru and ask for initiation into Brahma-Vidya. I feel that if a man can successfully attain perfection in Sadhana-Chatushtaya unaided by anyone else—that means he has abundant spiritual Samskaras brought from previous birth, grace of God, and a mighty will-power—he can himself attain Self-realisation, guided by the Inner Guru, the Paramatman! The aspirant really needs a spiritual guide only in the initial, struggling stages.

Even then only that man who knows our aptitudes and difficulties, can give us instruction and guidance. Supposing he is a Brahma-Nishtha Guru who is ever absorbed in Brahman, who sees nothing beside himself; how can he train a beginner? He has to come down to the lowest plane in order to guide the aspirant. And he should create the proper field to suit the temperament and aptitude of the aspirant in order that he may attain God-realisation. Many saints lack this; then do not have a field in which to train all aspirants of varying temperaments and capacities.

A Bhakta, a Jnani, a Hatha Yogi, a Vairagi, a typist, a printer, a cook, a carpenter, an engineer—everyone can enjoy real peace of mind, good health and long life, and attain Self-realisation, too, at the Sivanandashram under the personal guidance of Siva—this is the unique feature I find in Siva. Other Ashrams are meant only for the followers of one Path—some for Hatha Yogis, some only for Nishkama Karma Yogis, others for Bhaktas and yet others for high intellectuals. Only they will be admitted in those institutions; others will not. But, here is a common field where any type of aspirant can come; and everyone can feel quite at home. It is only Sri Swami Sivanandaji who has taken much care to guide aspirants in accordance with their tastes and capacities.

Swamiji says: "Adapt, adjust, accommodate; bear insult, bear injury (this is the) highest Sadhana." I find that he is the only one who lives up to this high ideal. He is the one who readily adapts himself to all. He bears insults and injuries with a smile for all. It is only because he adjusts and adapts himself, that we find ourselves quite at home. Instead of adjusting our ways to him, he adjusts his ways to ours! This is a great wonder indeed.

That is why I say: let it be a small baby or an old man, a Hatha Yogi or the greatest Vairagi,—here is the field for you. You find all here.

The Origin Of Birthday Celebrations

We celebrate the Birthday of Krishna (Krishna Janmashtami) only once in a year. We celebrate the Birthday of Rama (Rama Navami) once in a year. But Swamiji's Birthdate is celebrated all over the country once a month, on the 8th!

Let us see: what is the function? Is it one when we merely glorify or honour Sri Swami Sivananda? No, it is another occasion when we all assemble together and do intense Sadhana collectively. If that be our aim, we can celebrate his birthday every day!

In fact, even the annual Birthday celebration had its origin that way. Then there were only six or seven inmates at "Ananda Kutir". Once Swamiji has been to Sitapur to conduct Sankirtan and hold Sadhana classes there. I invited some Mahatmas of Rishikesh to join us in a Satsanga. We called it Swamiji's Birthday. I had not the least idea of the actual birthday of Swamiji. That was an occasion for us, disciples of Sri Swami Sivananda, to hear the inspiring speeches of the Mahatmas of Rishikesh and the Swarga Ashram on the life and mission of Sri Swamiji Maharaj. On the first occasion Sri Swami Atmanandaji gave a brilliant address on Sri Swamiji's Tapasya. I printed a report of the proceedings. Some newspapers also published the report.

That encouraged me. Later, I celebrated the Birthday every year. Some devotees of Swamiji assembled here; they had Swamiji's Darshan and the Satsanga of the Mahatmas. They were all benefited. Some new Sadhakas who attended these birthday celebrations were also benefited; they came to be better acquainted with Swamiji and his teachings.

In 1938 I announced through the newspapers that Swamiji's Birthday would be celebrated. Many people sent me thrilling accounts of their spiritual experiences: how their lives were transformed by their contact

with Sri Swamiji Maharaj. We collected all these and brought out a Birthday souvenir. Thus the Birthday celebrations were gaining strength!

What part did Swath Sivanandaji play in all these celebrations?

Some devotees of Swamiji have added one more stanza to his own Song of Arati. They do Arati to him also in the end. When they do it here, Swamiji does not check them; on the contrary, he, too, sings "Jaya Jaya Arati Satgurunatha; Satgurunatha, Sivananda". When I asked him about it once, he remarked: "There are many Sivanandas." Some people like to see him clothed in garlands: we saw this during Swamiji's All-India Tour. He calmly bears the load, like an idol. Otherwise, the devotees would be displeased! If Swamiji does not accede to their request, they would be hurt. That, Swamiji does not want. So he keeps quiet. Whether you celebrate the Birthday every year or every month, or abolish it altogether, he does not care. If you celebrate it, he asks you to utilise that opportunity for doing intense collective Sadhana.

Some Sannyasins do not allow themselves to be photographed. Every one of you would like to be photographed standing with Swamiji! Why should he deny that pleasure to you? Swamiji accedes to your request. He feels that, then, you will evolve nicely; the photograph will inspire you to do more Sadhana according to Swamiji's teachings; you will evolve and progress rapidly on the spiritual path.

During the All-India Tour at several centres Swamiji had to sit like a statue for over an hour, while people worshipped him. His desire is not to be so worshipped. He is dead against Gurudom. He does not even like to be called Satguru or "His Holiness". The Sadhus of Rishikesh gathered together and called him "Mahamandaleshwar"; he laughed at it and remarked, "It is like calling one the Greatest Fool on Earth". Similarly he would have stopped the Birthday celebrations also; but the

devout wish of the aspirants prevailed. When Swamiji found that, whatever be the occasion, people gathered together on his Birthday, he found in it an opportunity to inspire people, to conduct collective Sadhana and enable aspirants to evolve rapidly.

SIVANANDA'S SIDDHI

He Has Tamed Many Lions!

In 1931 I did not come here to become Swamiji's disciple. I came here to protest against Swamiji's method of work, and wanted to ask him to stop inspiring young men to renounce the world and embrace Sannyasa.

A couple of years before that, when I expressed a desire to renounce the world, after reading his writings, he asked me to join ...Ashram or ...Mutt. I obeyed. What I found there shocked me. They wrote one thing; their private life revealed quite another thing! I was disgusted with spiritual life itself. I wanted to rejoin my family. But, before that I wanted to teach Swami Sivanandaji a lesson!

A young sturdy man that I was, I went to Swamiji with this set purpose.

What do you think I did actually? I was paralysed by his mere look. A man whom no other Sannyasi in India could control, fell at his feet, dumb, mute, speechless and utterly vanquished.

After twenty years, even today I cannot find out through what power he conquered me. Not his knowledge of the Shastras: I did not know much of Sanskrit, and was not interested in it; not through Siddhis and miracles; not through anything you can think of; but by a mere look! I do not even now know what power there was in that look.

I do not want people to believe me blindly. I did not want that people should depend upon our glorification of Swamiji, in order to follow him. The lion was out of the cage: for two months Swamiji toured throughout the country. Millions saw him, worshipped him, listened to him and were inspired by him. Even today I am getting letters from people narrating the miracles that Swamiji performed. Ramalingeswara Rao of Kovvur said that for three months after the Tour they could hear the

echo of “OM” from the surrounding hills. He also told me another instance.

His father-in-law was seriously sick just before Swamiji’s visit to Kovvur. Ramalingeswara Rao was worried about the arrangements to be made for the Swamiji’s visit. He prayed to Swamiji. Swamiji conducted prayers for the old man and sent “Bhasma” (sacred ash). Today, that very old man of eighty years is tilling the field, is more active and more healthy than he has ever been in his life.

God willing, Swamiji’s feet will bless the soil of every country in the world. A global tour is being organised. Already the news has been flashed in several foreign journals and papers. Swamiji’s one all-consuming love is to serve humanity. If people in different countries organise interesting programmes and prepare the ground, the entire world will see and hear this mighty sage, who by a mere look could transform man into God.

SIVANANDA AND THE BULLOCK-CART DRIVER

Sri Swami Sivananda's Secret Revealed

Brahma the Creator "writes out" "on the crown of the head" of each one, one's life-forecasts. The broad outline of the shape of things to come is there. But practically no one is able to remember what Brahma wrote on his head!

It happened long ago that a young man, the son of a bullock-cart driver, suddenly recollected what Brahma had written on his head before his birth. He had an intuitive flash. He recapitulated Brahma's words: "Bulls will provide your livelihood."

His father, the bullock-cart driver, was getting old; and the son took over the father's business. He would ply the cart all day and return to the house in the evening completely exhausted, with a paltry four and half annas, the day's earnings of which two annas would go to the toddy shop and the balance would have to be shared among the five, his parents, his wife, himself and his son. In those days living was not so costly as it is now.

One evening the young man got a brain-wave. He felt wretched at the thought that in spite of such hard labour day in and day out, he had merely to drag on an impoverished existence and could hardly keep his own (and his family's) body and soul together. He remembered Brahma's words; "Bulls will provide your livelihood." He made up his mind. That evening he auctioned the bulls and the cart! They fetched him Rs. 20. People were amazed that he parted with them so easily for Rs. 20, though they were in fact worth more than Rs. 150. But they did not know what he knew!

He ran into the bazaar and purchased sweetmeats for his son, a saree for his wife, and clothes for his parents. He held a feast that night in his house. He did not tell anyone at home that he had sold away the very means of his livelihood! The money that he had got out of the sale of the bulls and the cart, he had spent before he retired to bed that night! "Bulls will provide your livelihood," he muttered to himself and dozed off.

He awoke in the morning and went to the shed, reflecting over Brahma's verdict "Bulls will provide your livelihood." He had sold the bulls and the cart away! To his great astonishment, he found two fine bulls and a cart in the shed! He understood that Brahma's words could not be falsified.

He went about his work as usual. That day he got Rs. 2 as his wages for plying the cart. He purchased the necessary provisions for the household and returned home penniless. Life went on this way: if the bullock-cart fetched him the minimum needed for the comfortable living of the family, he was content with merely plying the cart. He never thought of playing with Brahma's will; he never intended to black-mail Brahma. But, if the income fell below that minimum, he would sell away the bulls and the cart; and, what is more important, he would quickly spend the sale proceeds in purchasing the necessaries of the household. Invariably, he found the bulls and the cart in the shed next morning. Brahma's will can never be thwarted.

Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is exactly like this bullock-cart driver! He has realised what Brahma had written on his head! So, he is carefree. Swamiji is reckless and indiscriminate in his charity. Books, Journals and other spiritual literature literally flow from Ananda Kutir in a flood-stream. Swamiji is careful in ensuring that his time, his energy, and the money are all spent in the service of the Lord's children. There is no selfishness here. He knows Brahma's will: therefore, he reserves nothing

for the morrow. Mysteriously enough, the Mission progresses by leaps and bounds. Money merely flows through Ananda Kutir: it does not stagnate. The devotees' charity is converted into rich spiritual treasure and instantly returned to them. Many devotees of Siva like Sri Kashi Babu, Sri Banaresilalji, Sri Pannalalji, Sri Gajanan Sharma and others have understood Siva!

DYNAMIC PRATYAHARA AND DHARANA

There was a salesman at Madras who canvassed orders for watches. He would go to the various cities in India and secure orders for thousands of pieces. He had intense application to his work. He applied his heart and soul to his job. He developed the shrewd business knack of convincing the dealers that the watches he sold were the very best available.

The editor of a Journal acquired the service of this salesman. He knew that a person who could efficiently sell watches could also sell space (i.e., the advertisement columns of the Journal) with equal success. And, it actually turned out to be so. The salesman was able to help the editor to raise the circulation of the Journal to a lakh of copies in a very short time.

* * *

Sri Swami Sivanandaji's potent Yoga-technique is based on this principle. He asks you to apply yourself heart and soul to your task. Develop intense concentration. Take an intense interest in your work. Be unselfish: then you will not be worried and you will enjoy peace of mind which is very necessary to develop your will-power. When you develop intense concentration in your work, you will at the same time be growing in will-power, too! You may be a clerk; you may be a scientist;

you may be an artist; you may be a lawyer; you may be a businessman: but, if you adopt this technique, you will find that you achieve phenomenal success in your career, even as our friend attained success in the watch-business.

If you are unselfish, you will attain Chitta-Suddhi. In a very short time, you will possess all the greatest qualities necessary for instantaneous Self-realisation... viz., purity of heart, intense concentration and tremendous will-power. Just as the editor acquired the services of the traveller and directed his genius in a new channel, your Guru will appear on the scene and a word of sacred Upadesha from his lips will at once liberate you from Samsara; for, the moment you turn your gaze within, your will-power and concentration of mind will burn the veil of ignorance in an instant! Thus a Karma Yogi can easily achieve the success that a student of Raja Yoga attains through a much more difficult process.

SIVANANDA: THOUSAND YEARS HENCE

Sivananda Art Studio's Contribution to Posterity

Even after a thousand years, people will be able to witness the actions of a saint and listen to his powerful voice. And that would be possible only because the Sivananda Art Studio, under the able "piloting" of Sri Yogiraj Padmanabhan, has made tremendous progress during recent years, and has preserved the magic of sage Sivananda's movements on celluloid and has captured his stirring speeches and songs with the magnetic tape.

Early in the thirtees, I purchased a box-camera for Rs. 3/-. It is still preserved in the Studio as a memento. I struggled hard to purchase an 8 m.m. movie camera. Swami Sivanandaji would not allow any money to be spent on it, and I had somehow determined to get it on instalment basis. Luckily the Raja of Atgarh presented a 16 m.m. camera and a projector also. I danced in joy.

Mrs. Liliane Shamash of California gave the first major impetus to the Studio by presenting the Speedgraphic Camera. And, today, thanks to Padmanabhan's relentless endeavour, we have a first-class Studio with the latest equipments.

These are powerful weapons in our divine armoury. The Yoga movie-films depicting Asanas, Yogic Kriyas and Pranayamas have today been duplicated and are being shown in Europe. I toured all over South India exhibiting those films; people were thrilled. The pictures and the films are the eternal records of historic events.

Today we only read in the Puranas that Rama, Krishna and Buddha once lived on this very earth. People cannot see what They did nor hear what They said. The people of posterity are lucky: they will not have to

depend upon Puranas alone, they would actually see Sivananda in action (on the silver screen) and hear him speak through the tape-recorder.

SIVANANDA CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

Selfless service is the very life-breath of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. He always emphasised that it is dynamic, living, practical Vedanta and that it leads directly to the highest goal—Self-realisation. This Charitable Hospital had its birth not here, but in Lakshmanjhula as early as 1924 when Swamiji established the Satyasevashram Dispensary there; no, earlier still, in Malaya where Swamiji in his Purvashram served thousands as an eminent doctor over thirty years ago. Swamiji's has been a life of service and he always says: 'I live to serve you all. I live to make you all happy'. This hospital is only one of the innumerable proofs he has given of his burning desire to serve humanity.

GANDHIJI AND SIVANANDA

When we closely analyse the characteristics of Mahatmaji and Swamiji, we find wonderful similarity. Both of them loved punctuality. Both of them loved cleanliness in regard to their own person and surroundings.

There was an abundance in Mahatmaji of that great quality that distinguishes a man-of-God from a man-in-the-street: his heart bled for the sufferings of humanity and he felt restless till relief was brought to the needy. This is the hall-mark in Swamiji's personality too. And, Swamiji has assigned to himself the task of removing not only the physical ills of mankind, but its moral and spiritual ills, too. Thus he is a fulfilment of Mahatmaji.

Gandhiji was a national leader. So is Swamiji. Their mission is not circumscribed by any limitations. They have come to serve and to awaken the entire humanity, not a handful of individuals. Therefore, they have both adopted the same divine principles to achieve their goal.

THE YOGA VEDANTA FOREST UNIVERSITY PRESS

It is not a printing press; it is the heart of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. It does not work; it pulsates. It does not produce books; it pumps the life-blood of Divine Life, infusing life, light and joy into the very beings of millions. all over the world.

In 1937 when Swamiji and all of us were living on Kshetra Bhiksha, when all of us had to walk three miles to Rishikesh to get a few rotties and a cup of dal, the purchase of a rotary duplicating machine gave Swamiji the greatest joy. Swamiji's Forest Talks were cyclostyled on that machine. That was the beginning.

Today in spite of the critical financial situation through which the Society is passing, in spite of so many obstacles and difficulties, the press has been established on firm foundation; and it is working day and night ceaselessly pouring forth the Message of Sri Swami Sivanandaji, the Message for which millions all over the world are waiting. This has been made possible only by the untiring services and mighty will power of Sri Swami Nityanandaji, Sri Swami Dayanandaji and Sri Swami Satyanandaji.

The other workers in the Ashram and in the press, and the public too, have co-operated and contributed their share to the success of the work. With mere joyous co-operation and support from the public, the press will be able to turn out more work. With Swamiji's Grace, we shall be able to issue a daily Divine Life paper! What Swamiji writes today should reach the readers tomorrow morning. Then a new era will dawn on the earth.

Sage Siva's Mighty Instrument

This Press is not like any other Press in the world. It has got a different mission. Printing Press is the very life-breath of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

For saints to do spiritual good to humanity, they need the means. And it is a great wonder that Sri Swamiji selected the English language and the Press as potent instruments in his mission. In the modern world only through these two things that wonder can be achieved, through which India's spiritual message can reach the four corners of the earth.

For the dynamic mission of Sri Swamiji, he chose a select band of selfless workers. The workers here are not like the workers of other places. Here the work in the Press is a means for salvation. Guru-Kripa has created this field for our evolution; it is our duty to see that Gurudev's mission is fulfilled and that is our Sadhana for spiritual evolution.

I have seen very big presses which turn out newspapers and journals. I have seen the stuff they produce—mostly profane, irreligious and demoralising. Here, we have produced beautiful spiritual literature, big volumes and journals which have given help, solace and inspiration to thousands of struggling souls. In spite of many obstacles incident upon the Press being located at such a far away place as this,—sometime there is financial difficulty, the machines are there but sometimes there is no ink, plenty of manuscripts are there, but sometimes there is no paper—and that shows the sincerity and devotion that the workers have to Gurudev and his mission.

Previously, we were all hesitating to run a Press here; for even a small accessory, for a small screw if it is broken we have to run to Dehra Dun or Delhi. But the enthusiasm and zeal of Sri Swami Nityanandaji, Sri Swami Dayanandaji, Sri Swami Satyanandaji and Sri Sivapremji has

surmounted all obstacles, and through Sri Gurudev's Grace these handful of dynamic workers succeeded in establishing the Press and in running it smoothly and efficiently. We have now been able to bring out Swamiji's books so quickly that our work could well be the envy of much bigger Presses.

There is no difference in our attitude towards the paid staff and the selfless workers of the Press. To us even the paid employees are Brahmacharis and "Sannyasins". They are all given equal respect. We feel we are living together, working for a common mission.

This is not a commercial institution. Many people do not get the comforts and conveniences that they need but that does not make them slacken their work and weaken their zeal. In other Presses people work for breads, comforts and power; here the Press is a field for our spiritual evolution. Here they get something which is not available anywhere else—Swamiji's Darshan, his Grace and Seva.

This Press is a shrine. I pray that the inmates of the Ashram and also visitors who stay here for fairly long periods should contribute their maximum service to the Press. No technical knowledge is necessary. Here, as in most fields for selfless service, it is the willing and eager heart that is necessary; opportunities are never scarce.

May the blessings of Gurudev be upon us all; and may the Press continue to serve humanity in an ever-increasing measure.

HE BECOMES YOU

The Rarest of the Traits Present in Swami Sivananda

The greatness of Sri Swami Sivananda is being variously attributed to many of the qualities present in him. Each one of his disciples as well as admirers, beholding him, as it is, from different angles attributes this greatness to this one particular quality of his or that. Some say, he is great because of his contributions to the spiritual literature of the world. Some look upon it as the outcome of the Society founded by him. But I, having had the opportunity to study him and his activities inch by inch, can definitely say that his greatness is not so much due to his authorship or foundership as to Swami Sivananda having made himself the 'cheapest product' in all the world. And what he is today, is the outcome of his self-made 'cheapness.' In what way has he made himself 'cheap'?

Sannyasins, as a rule, as is seen by us, maintain a peculiar bearing when persons belonging to the other three Ashrams approach them. Sometimes, they will not even turn to your side, as you bow to them. They are too much conscious of their individual status as Sannyasins. In other words, they have the Sannyasa-Abhimana, the very thing that is being condemned by Sri Swamiji Maharaj time and again. If you read his poem 'Song of a Karma Yogin', you will understand more about this 'Abhimana'. Many of the Sannyasins will not even move with the Grihastis and others. But it is all different with Sri Swamiji Maharaj.

He has made himself so 'cheap' that anyone could approach him easily, a rogue and a saint, a man of vicious deeds as well as a virtuous man, a beggar and a prince, a child and Vedantin have equal access to him. None is barred from his presence. He makes himself available to all easily and thus he has made himself the 'cheapest product' in the world. Had he maintained his dignity and prestige, he should have become the

dearest product in the world not easily available to all. But how is this 'cheapness' related to his greatness? Or, why he has made himself 'cheap?'

The answer is very simple. Either the mountain should go to Mohammed or Mohammed should go to the mountain.

By becoming cheap, Sri Swamiji comes down to the level of the Sadhaka, who is caught in the whirlpool of Maya, establishes a spiritual contact with the distressed and then slowly guides him towards the real Abode. Unless and until the Sage does it, how can his mission be fulfilled? Sages and saints and Sannyasins can deliver messages. But how will it help the deluded Jiva, if the latter cannot grasp it? That is why, Sri Swamiji making himself 'apparently cheap', comes down to your level, becomes one among you, and works for your emancipation. In short, Swami Sivananda becomes you to make you Swami Sivananda!

SIVA'S COLLYRIUM

Ajnana-Timirandhasya Jnananjana-salakaya; Chakshurunmeelitam Yena Tasmai Sri Gurave Namah. He who has cleaned the ignorance beclouded eye with the collyrium of
true knowledge and opened the eye of wisdom, to that Guru we bow.

[The following is a selection from hundreds of soul-awakening articles from the pen of Sage Siva that have been published in the various periodicals all over the world and whose words have been enshrined in millions of hearts. A few of them are added to this book in the fervent hope that by the practice of these precepts the reader will grow into a superman or a divine being.]

Universal Love

The only Sara Vastu (essential thing) in this world is Prem or Love. It is eternal, infinite and undecaying. Physical love is passion (Moha) or infatuation. Universal love only is Divine love. Cosmic love and universal love are synonymous terms. God is love. Love is God. Selfishness, greed, egoism, vanity, pride and hatred contract the heart and stand in the way of developing universal love.

Develop universal love gradually through selfless service, Satsanga with great souls, prayer, recitation of Guru Mantra, etc. When the heart is contracted through selfishness in the beginning, man loves only his wife, children, a few friends and relatives. As he evolves he loves the people of his own district, then the people of his own province. Later on he develops love for men of his own country. Eventually, he begins to love other people of different countries. In the long run he begins to love all. He develops universal love. All the barriers are broken now. Heart is expanded infinitely. It is very easy to talk of universal love. But when

you want to put it into actual practice, it becomes extremely difficult. Petty-mindedness of all sorts comes in the way. Old wrong impressions which you have created by your wrong mode of life in the past, act as stumbling blocks. Through iron determination, strong will power, patience, perseverance, and Vichara (right enquiry), you can conquer all obstacles quite easily. The grace of the Lord will descend on you if you are sincere.

Universal love terminates in Advaitic unity or oneness or Upanishadic consciousness of seers and sages. Pure love is a great leveller. It brings equality and equanimity. Hafiz, Kabir, Mira, Gouranga, Tukaram, Ramdas—all have tasted this universal love. What others have achieved you can also attain.

Feel that the whole world is your body, your own home. Melt or destroy all barriers that separate man from man. The idea of superiority is ignorance or delusion. Develop Visva-prem, all-embracing love. Unite with all. Separation is death. Unity is eternal life. The whole world is Visva-Brindavan. Feel that this body is a moving temple of God. Wherever you are, whether at home, in office, railway station or market, feel that you are in the temple. Consecrate every act as an offering unto the Lord. Transmute every work into Yoga by offering its fruits to God. Have Akarata, Sakshi Bhav, if you are a student of Vedanta. Have Nimitta Bhav if you are a student of Bhakti Marga. Feel that all beings are images of God. Isaa Vasyam Idam Sarvam—this world is indwelt by the Lord. Feel that one power of God works through all hands, sees through all eyes, hears through all ears. You will become a changed being. You will enjoy the highest peace and bliss.

May Lord Hari take you all to His bosom and bathe you with the waters of sweet love! May your heart be filled with cosmic love.

Peace

Peace is a divine attribute. It is a quality of the soul. It cannot remain with greedy persons. It fills the pure heart. It deserts the lustful. It runs away from the selfish. It is an ornament of the Paramahamsa.

Perfect serenity and full peace cannot be had in the world or relative plane. Even if you become the emperor of the whole world, you can hardly enjoy the real peace and bliss. It can be found only within.

You can enjoy much peace of mind if you do not poke your nose into the affairs of others.

Mind your own business and rest in peace.

Wealth, women, children, property, palatial buildings cannot give you everlasting peace. Look within the chambers of your heart. When you are established in the highest Self within you, you will not be shaken even by heavy sorrow, loss or failure, inharmonious or disagreeable vibrations. You will tide over all difficulties or crises in life easily and will come out with triumph in all life's experiences. Mysterious is this Peace. Marvellous is this Peace. Realise this Peace.

Lead an ideal life of peace. Kill ruthlessly suspicion, prejudices of all sorts, envy, jealousy, selfishness, greed of power and possessions. Practise daily meditation and establish peace in your heart. Then radiate it to your neighbours and all who come in contact with you. Disseminate it far and wide. Preach the gospel of peace to all men and women of the world.

You may be in quite adverse circumstances. You may remain in the midst of calamities, troubles, tribulations, difficulties and sorrows and yet you may enjoy the inward harmony and peace, if you rest in God by withdrawing the senses, by stilling the mind and eradicating its

impurities. Lord Jesus was persecuted in a variety of ways. He was put to death on the Cross and yet what did he say? He said, "Oh, Lord, forgive them. They know not what they are doing". How peaceful he was even when his life was at stake! He was enjoying the inner peace. No tribulation or calamity could touch him.

Be still. Be in tune with the Divine Will. Let go all the worries. Cast out all cares and anxieties. Get deep down into the innermost recesses of your heart and plunge in the ocean of Peace.

Cultivate peace first in the garden of your heart by removing the weeds of lust, hatred, greed, selfishness, jealousy. Then only you can manifest it externally. Then only those who come in contact with you will be benefited by your vibrations of peace and harmony.

Near the divine whisper in silence. Realise the power of faith. Feel God's sustaining grace. Know the way of escape. Build the shrine of love or the temple of devotion in your heart. Enter the silence. Enjoy the life transcendent. Live within. Merge in the soul. Know the Self. Become That. Be free. Move about happily.

Peace is your birthright. Peace is filling your being within and without. Peace is in front of you, behind you, to the right, to the left, above and below. Peace is the only living Reality. Names and forms are illusory. Realise this Peace and be free. Wonderful is the Power of Peace that brings joy and eternal bliss.

Inner Peace

Real deeper peace is independent of external conditions. Real abiding peace is stupendous stillness of the Immortal soul within. If you can rest yourself in this ocean of Peace, all the usual noises of the world can hardly affect you. If you enter the silence or the wonderful calm of

divine peace by stilling the bubbling mind and restraining the thoughts and withdrawing the outgoing senses, all disturbing noises will die away. Motor cars may roll on the streets, boys may shout at the pitch of their voices, railway trains may run in front of your house, several mills may be working in your neighbourhood and yet all these noises will not disturb you even a bit.

If you wish to enter into the Great Peace of God, all the worldly desires must die, all the senses should be brought under your perfect control and the mind should be stilled.

Rich people possess immense wealth. They have all sorts of comforts, easy circumstances and easy-going life. They have decent motor cars, beautiful bungalows, etc. They take dainties and palatable dishes and go to hill stations during summer. And yet they have no peace of mind because they have no inner harmony. There is discord in their hearts on account of their greed, selfishness, egoism, lust, pride, hatred, anger, fear, worry, etc. Outward harmony and quietness cannot give you real peace of mind. The peace of God is an internal state. You can have it without the help of money and outward favourable circumstances.

The man who cannot fix his mind in meditation, cannot have knowledge of the Self. The unsteady man cannot practice any meditation. He cannot have any intense devotion to knowledge of the Self or any burning longing for liberation and Moksha. He who does not practise any meditation cannot possess peace of mind. How can there be happiness for the unpeaceful?

Desire or Trishna (thirsting for objects) is the enemy of peace. There cannot be any iota or tinge of happiness for a man who is thirsting for sensual objects. The mind will be ever restless and will be hankering after the objects.

When this thirsting dies, man enjoys peace. Only he can meditate and rest himself in the

Self.

When you behold the objects of the senses, the mind enters the objects. When you do not perceive the objects, the objects enter the mind. You find it very difficult to free yourself from the clutches of sensual objects. But if you remain as a Sakshi or silent witness you will not be affected by them. Therefore cultivate the Sakshi-bhav and remain as a witness of the Vrittiis or waves of the mind. You will enjoy the Peace of the Eternal.

Develop universal love. This will help you to live peacefully with all men and all creatures. Love and peace are inseparable. Where there is love there is peace and wherever there is peace there is love.

Conquest Of The Mind

The mind can be controlled by Abhyasa and Vairagya. Abhyasa is constant effort to fix the mind on God or Atman. Vairagya is dispassion or non-attachment to sensual objects.

Enquire “Who am I?” Do Vichara. Do mental Japa of Om and meditate on Atman. All thoughts will die by themselves. You will rest in Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman.

Sit alone and watch the Vrittis of the mind. Be indifferent. Remain as a Sakshi. Don’t identify yourself with the Vrittis. The mind will then be under your control.

Destroy the fuel of desire, and the fire of thought will be extinguished. With the annihilation of Sankalpa, the reality of Brahman will shine. Cultivate Divine qualities such as friendliness, mercy, gladness, and

indifference towards happiness, pain, virtue and vice. You will get peace of mind.

Don't think of the past. Don't plan for the future. Do not allow the mind to build images. Live in the solid present.

Do a thing which the mind does not want to do. Do not do a thing which the mind wants to do.

Don't try to fulfil your desires. Don't hope. Don't expect anything.

Destroy the vicious desire through virtuous desires and destroy the virtuous desire also through one strong desire for liberation.

Practice of Pranayama destroys Rajas and Tamas, makes the mind steady and one-pointed.

Study of religious books, Tapas, charity and Satsanga with Mahatmas, Sadhus and Sannyasins overhauls worldly vicious Samskaras and paves a long way in the control of mind.

Japa of any Mantra and Upasana destroys the impurities of the mind, makes the mind inward, induces Vairagya, helps concentration and eventually leads to control of mind and attainment of God-consciousness.

'Kalau Kesava Kirtanat'. In this Kali Yuga the easiest way for controlling the mind and attaining Moksha is Kirtan or singing the Name of the Lord.

Food has influence over the mind. Sattvic food (milk, fruits, etc.) calms the mind. Rajasic food (meat, alcohol, etc.) excites the mind. Take Sattvic food, have Mitahara (moderation in diet).

Destroy evil habits by establishing new good habits. Control the lower instinctive mind through the higher Sattvic mind.

Constant selfless service with Atma-Bhav is highly efficacious in purifying and controlling the mind.

Don't wrestle or struggle with the mind. Be regular in your concentration and meditation.
May Peace, Joy, Bliss and Immortality abide in you for ever!

Self-Control

Self-control leads to the highest merit. Self-control is the eternal duty of man. Self-control surpasses in merit, charity and study of the Vedas.

Self-control increases your energy. Self-control is highly sacred.
Through self-control you will be purified of all your sins, and gifted with energy and character. You will acquire the blessedness.

There is no other duty equal to self-control. Self-control is the highest virtue in the world. Through self-control you can enjoy the highest happiness both in this world and in the next. Gifted with self-control you will win great virtue.

The self-controlled man sleeps happily and awakes happily and moves in the world happily.
He is always cheerful. Self-control is the best of all vows.

The man who is without self-control always suffers misery. He brings upon himself many calamities, all begotten by his own faults.

Forgiveness, patience, abstention from injury, impartiality, truth, sincerity, control of the senses, cleverness, mildness, modesty, firmness, liberality, freedom from anger, contentment, sweetness of words, benevolence, freedom from malice ... all these combined make up self-control.

It also consists of respect for the preceptor and mercy for all. The man of self-control avoids both adultation and slander. Depravity, infamy, falsehood, lust, covetousness, pride, arrogance, fear, envy and disrespect are all shunned by the man of self-control.

He never incurs obloquy. He is free from envy.

That eternal region in Brahman which originates from Vedic penances and which is concealed in a cave can only be acquired by self-control.

The self-controlled man is never fettered by the attachments originating from earthly connections and sentiments.

That is a forest where the man of self-control lives. That is ever a sacred place. Of what use is the forest to him who has no self-control?

The man of self-control acquires great reward in the next world. He acquires esteem is this world and attains to a high end hereafter. He acquires the state of Brahman. He attains liberation.

SIVA'S LETTERS TO PARAMANANDA

[These letters were written when Paramanandaji was known as Jayarama Sharma, and before he had met Siva. Swamiji was then living as a Tapasvi in Swarga Ashram. The Divine Life Society had not been established. Note the general tone of the letters: the practical instructions that Swamiji is giving throughout these twenty-five years have been surprisingly the same, revealing that he knew his mission from the very start of his life as monk. The Ashram and the Divine Life Society grew around him as an inevitable result of his soul's wish to serve humanity, and the very seeker to whom Siva had written that he could not allow disciples to stay with him had the good fortune of shaping the initial growth of the Ashram and the Society.

Another interesting point is Swamiji's attitude to contemporary saints and religious institutions. He is himself an exemplar in devotion to all saints and is as much interested in promoting the welfare of other Ashrams as of the institution which we call his own.]

Siva's Hammer

Brahman alone is real. You are Brahman minus Indriyas. "Tat Tvam Asi". I am not tired of repeating these three ideas again and again. They must enter your very nerves, cells, blood and bone. Hammer these ideas on the minds of all along with Bhakti and Nishkamya Karma. Carry these three ideas in your pocket and Chitta. This world is shallow, shadow, Jalam, Svapnam.

Wherever you go, give, distribute, disseminate your ideas, mottoes, ideals. Broadcast your spiritual feelings and experiences. Share with others. Always give, give, give. Give all. Ask nothing. Your usual routine for meditation and study must be kept up. —7-8-1933.

Dynamic Spiritual Awakening

Prescribe Japa Maala for everyone you come in contact. Japa of 200 Maalas or 15 or 10 must be done daily by all Sadhakas. Ask them to read Gita one Chapter daily. Force everyone to have a copy of Gita in the pocket. Teach Asanas to thousands. Conduct common meditation and prayer. Organise chorus Kirtan and Bhajan. Chant OM before starting meditation and after. Hold classes on Yoga. Read my papers and explain the terms. Hold such classes in different corners of the city. The whole city must be spiritually charged. —27-5-1933.

Regulate your energy. Don't put it all at once. Take sufficient rest. Run away to suburbs when people trouble you much. Hide yourself. "Rest" means change of work. It is not sleeping. Merge yourself in concentration and meditation. Then reappear with renewed vigour. —13-5-1933.

Give a copy of all my books to Libraries, Ashrams and High Schools. We will have to awaken youths in whom there is purity and strength. Many will get inspiration. You will be doing a great service to the public. —2-10-1934.

To Bring Out Hidden Faculties

Kindly form a Group. Read my books in the evening. Clear the aspirants' doubts. Put them in the path. Make them do a little Japa, Kirtan and meditation, study religious books and maintain a spiritual Diary. Gradually they will evolve. This will be a great service you do to the public. You have got rare things and knowledge of which you have not got sufficient confidence. Become confident. Express. Give whatever you possess. The world will be benefited. Form such groups in different centres. Do not waver. Be hopeful. You can work wonders. Radiate. Have a definite line of work. Work a little. This will suffice.

You can spend the time nicely. Let the flower blossom. The bees will come by themselves. Much effort is not needed. No effort is needed. Simply open the switch. It will flow. May Lord bless you with, and give you Shanti, Freedom and Perfection.

—18-9-1943.

"This Is How I Work"

The world is a mental Jalam, Bhrama (mere appearance) and Deerga Svapna (long dream). You are Vyapaka Atman. Be established in this one idea. I have to hammer you on this point very often. Without hammering nature refuses to change.

Now I am in Sitapur. I have done a lot of work in the whole of U.P. I do not know the date. You can see the date-stamp. I have begun to roar like a lion of Vedanta. It is a great surprise for the audience. I organise early morning common prayer and meditation, Prabhat Pheri, Nagar Kirtan, and introduce Asanas and Likhita Japa competition. I visit the High Schools and Colleges and deliver fiery lectures. At night Satsanga I ask all Bhaktas to sing Kirtans and Bhajans. Thousands of leaflets and pamphlets are distributed free. I may proceed to Meerut to join a Kirtan Conference. I have no time. Do not send me any of my letters. I cannot write letters. That will interfere with my work here. I pour forth all my energy. People are devouring me from all corners. —26-11-1932.

Work hard. Meditate. Do Svadhyaya. Don't talk. Don't mix. Don't be curious for news. Go for a walk alone ,in the evening. —4.12.1933.

"My Words Are Charged With Power"

You can use your razor in removing certain portions of my writings. But remember it is not the language or style but the power behind the thought that influences people. In trying to improve the language, etc.,

the force must never be lost. Whenever you make changes, you must reflect over the views of the author. Mere metaphysical or flowery decoration will not make any improvement. My words are charged with power. The force of the writer must always be there. Keep this in view. —15-4-1936.

Another important point: Don't delete Sanskrit expressions. You have caught the contagion from the editors of newspapers. There is a special force, beauty and elegance in this style. The Sanskrit terms will not in the least affect the continuity of thought while reading. —5-8-1938.

What is the use of spoiling a book by cutting short the important articles and giving l, 2, 3, 4, points. Get small types and finish the whole matter in reduced number of pages. The present policy does not appeal to me. My labour is lost and the production is not good. It is not satisfactory. Bring this to the notice of the Publisher. —3-9-1936.

I believe in maximum spiritual good to the public in a short space of time. Do you know Dhanadhan-Kam or Fata-FutKam? You will have To complete 4 or 5 books at a time by engaging several presses. Don't rely on one only. Publishers, goldsmiths and tailors belong to the same hopeless category. Deception and untruth got its first entry there. I like "20 days' production" or "10 days' blowing out." —24-3-1934.

I smell you have omitted several portions from my articles. "Fasting," "Barometer," etc. The elaborate description of Pericarp, Nibodhaka fire, Nirvana Sakti, etc., etc., does not help the students much. It is all Greek and Latin to many-mystic. My writings are appreciated by the whole world. —9-4-1936.

No Copyright!

I work for wide dissemination of knowledge. Anybody can print my books and reproduce my articles in all the languages in Magazines and newspapers. In the Society's publications, you can give a note of this on the title cover. I encourage all publishers. Thousands will be benefited. Here is a good fortune for the publishers and printers. May you ever abide in the Lord.—27-7-1940.

Untiring and Unceasing Service

Swamiji, I can't understand why you object to my bringing out Practice of Yoga Vol. III, Vol. IV, Vol. V, Vol. VI and so on, if I give you fresh matter. They may not be graded. But they will be highly inspiring.

There is no harm. Let it be some series ad infinitum, till my eyes and body work alright. Don't be afraid. You can go to Uttarakashi next year. You need not look after the Press work. But prepare Sri "N" and "A". They are quite good persons. They are rapidly improving. They are forgetting the world and are absorbed with typing work. Pray, do not stop my Practice of Yoga series. I am quite sure people will run after them like bees and butterflies. —29-7-1936.

A Saint's Reaction to Loss

Sri Swami "P" says that he definitely, positively put the notes in the Registered Cover.

Some needy Narayan has taken it on the way. This is also good. —12-12-1942.

Say It with Humour

Received Kajoo (cashew) in a damaged condition on account of the admixture of sugar-candy in hot summer. The candy has melted and made the Kajoo soft, which will be nice for veteran Jnananandaji. My

teeth are quite sound! In future do not send candy but Kajoo alone.—14-5-1936.

Invitation to Paramananda

The winter of Rishikesh is sending you invitation. You may be feeling the cool breeze also. The stove which is sleeping is turning its face towards the Railway Station to receive Paramananda. He who throws light on winter season and stove is the Self-luminous Param-Ananda, the support for seasons and all names and forms. He never drinks and talks. He is Asanga. He is Sakshi always.—2-11-1936.

An Easy Way To Siddhahood

Sri Swami "N" has decided, to become a great Siddha soon by eating ½ vise of Nux Vomica seeds. He brought this contagion from Sri "V" from Haridwar. Now Sri "N" has some followers also. Kindly send him a small quantity. I don't think, you will join this club. —20-7-1936.

Tiger Skin For Two Words

Pranams. I laughed very much when I read your addition of two words "For Ever" to my instruction: 'use it on your bed'. This is a good policy. Yes, you really want one. You can have it (refers to one tiger skin). —25-5-1936.

The Fate of the Brahma Nishtha Package

Thy parcel received in due order. It was a Brahma packing with Brahmic screws which had attained Brahma Nishtha. Hammering was not able to remove the cover. After all the box was broken into. —12-3-1936.

A Pinch of Snuff Philosophy

The Virakta Mahatma requests you to send a big tin of snuff. He brings his ingenious arguments. —15-7-1936.

Snuff received and distributed between:

Mukhya Snuffer	(1) Chief Snuffer	Lieut. “V”
Adi-Snuffer	(2) Guru Snuffer	Sri. “N”
Sanatana Snuffer	(3) Old Snuffer	Old Swami “G”
Maha-Snuffer	(4) Terrible Snuffer	Young Mauni(Tyagi) of Swarga Ashram

You will get some Punya and Papa also. I will also get a share, a small quantity of Punya for relieving a bit of their suffering, Papa for making them Snuffers. Had we not supplied, their habit would have been killed. But Aham Brahma Asmi people are above Papa and Punya. So you are freed now by knowing your own Svaroopa. This is a little bit of snuff-philosophy. —2-8-1936.

Simple Sivananda

Kindly remove all “Krishna Avatara” business and Bhagavan business. Keep it natural and simple. Then is will be attractive. Do not exaggerate much about me very often. The juice will evaporate. Do not give me ‘titles’ as World Teacher, Maha-Mandaleshwar. Describe as simple “Sivananda.” Lay bare the Truth. Truth will always shine. I lead a simple and natural life. I take immense delight in service. Service has elevated me. Service has purified me. This body is meant for service. I live to make everyone happy and cheerful. —27-4-1934.

Adverbial Commandments

Study diligently. Obey implicitly. Endure courageously. Eat slowly. Sing fervently. Apply tenaciously. Think usefully. Act righteously. Persevere patiently.. Speak sweetly. Walk gently. Pray wholeheartedly. March boldly. Stick resolutely. Meditate seriously. Realise quickly. God

be with you! Peace be unto you! OM TAT SAT, OM SANTI. —5-7-1933.

Recharge the Battery Frequently

You can come to Rishikesh by the end of this month. Don't stay in cities longer. It will be detrimental to your interest. Do not worry about proofs. You need long seclusion and deep study for many years. You must study Gita and Upanishads. You are regular zero in this respect. Sadhana is needed. You need rest, quietude., in the Himalayan-Gangetic atmosphere for recharging the battery for doing future dynamic work with redoubled energy and vigour. —5-9-1932.

Attain Sahaja Samadhi

The reflection of face in mirror is false. You feel 'I am only real'. Even so this world and body and mind are unreal. Existence (Brahman) is the only solid Reality. Remember this. Discriminate always. The world will have no attraction. You will have Sahaja Avastha always even while working. The present work that you do is greater Yoga than the so-called important meditation (sleep and building castles combined) done by the Nivritti-Vedantins of the present day. It is 1,00,000 times better. It is a great Yajna. —6-5-1934.

Yoga of Service

You need not meditate. You need not do Japa. You need not close the nostrils. Convert every motion, every breath, every movement of the body with pure Yoga of service. Serve wholeheartedly, willingly, untiringly, without grumbling, without showing occasional Sunday-castor oil face. This is rather difficult, but you will have to do. Try your utmost. Then it will become pure Yoga. "Tat Tvam Asi"—claim this birthright amidst typewriting, arranging chapters and service. This is

better than the cave-life. This is dynamic integral YOGA of SIVA. —7-9-1935.

Brahma-Nishtha and Karma Yoga

I have to again reiterate. World is a dream, Jalam, jugglery of mind. It is Bhrama (mere appearance). You are Atman (Sat-chit-ananda). Assert it. Deny body. With great effort get yourself established in this Bhav. I am One-Ekam, Chidakasa, Akhanda Brahman, the Self of all beings. I am Sakshi; I am Akarta. Stamp out the hissing Indriyas and Vasanas. —18-11-1932.

Take rest. Don't overwork. Apply cooling oil to head. Do Pranayama in early morning when it is cool. It will recharge you with abundant energy. Take fruit juice. Never neglect morning meditation and evening meditation. The goal of a Sannyasi is Vedantic Realisation. Brahma Nishtha is your food, drink and all in all. This can be kept along with Karma Yoga. —6-8-1934.

The Big Field for All to Evolve

Kindly send me at your early convenience a short, succinct account of how you spend the 24 hours. Brahmachari Shiva Rao is welcome. Greetings for him. I shall serve him. This body is meant for service of all aspirants. I will carefully attend on him and guide him for a quick spiritual progress. You can send any number of sincere aspirants. Here I have created a big field. All can evolve. —5-8-1934.

Your Divine Heritage

You have learnt many things from that unhappy, unpleasant occurrence that was worrying you. It was in the grand plan for you to gain some experiences. Out of evil comes good. I have given you strength. Now rest in peace and work like a lion. Joy, Bliss, Strength, Splendour and

Glory are your Divine Heritage. Think you are the emperor of the world. Face difficulties boldly. Draw inner strength. God has given you a special favour. He has made you Brahmachari and cut off all ties and made you free absolutely. Where is room for lamentation, despair, sorrow, worry or depression? Smile, and always be cheerful. Peace, divine service, Yogic activities, dissemination of knowledge, form part and parcel of you now. I am always at the service of all spiritual aspirants. I will help you. Be assured. Be assured. Be assured. Jump in joy. Dance in ecstasy. Walk like a lion. Radiate joy, peace and strength to all around. —1-10-1934.

Come to Rishikesh

There is no dearth for food for you here. Hundreds of Sadhakas live with me. Why should you depend on others when I am here to serve you in all ways? Why should you live in a city? Gradually you will lose all your faculties when you are not in touch with work. The atmosphere is bad there. Therefore come at once to Rishikesh. You can spend six months here and six months in cities, if you like. You can assist me in hundreds of ways. You can work gently, mildly, slowly, a little without mixing with others, independently having connections with me only. Now you can work without any responsibility. This is God's blessings and Grace. Take plenty of rest and do a little work. If you change your outlook, vision, imagination and attitude a bit, you can be happy here and everywhere. Man suffers on account of his own imagination and old habit of thinking. He never allows himself to be changed. This is Maya. —22-2-1944.

Do It Now

May the Divine Light, Glory shine in you for ever. Regulate your energy. Conserve it. Utilise it when needed. Meditate well. Live in

closed room. Don't mix much. Don't talk much. Do not multiply friends. One real and sincere friend is quite sufficient. Command and get whatever you want. The whole world is your home. Prakriti and nine Riddhis are ready to serve you with folded hands. Control Indriyas. Be fiery. Don't become a Zenana Vedantin or a moustache lady Sannyasin. There must be fire in every cell, in every word. Read Upanishads and Gita. Master them well. You should have regular systematic meditation, Japa and study. Don't think "I will study when I am alone without work in Uttarakashi". This is wrong. This is foolishness. You must have the daily habit. That "tomorrow" will never come. Make hay while the sun shines. Winnow the corn when the wind blows. Concentrate. Meditate. Live alone for some hours. Be polite. Watch every thought. —24-2- 1933.

World-The Best Teacher

Om Sat-Chit-Ananda. Peace, Joy, Immortality.

Your devotion towards God and religion will doubtless elevate you from the world-mire.

May God bestow on you spiritual strength and power to attain the goal of life-God-realisation.

Kindly join the Ramakrishna Mission. There you will improve a lot. I promise you. I assure you. Stick to the Mission for some years. You may come here for visiting and not for permanent stay. Look before you leap. Think. Consider. **Never Resign the Job**. You will repent later on. Save as much as possible. This is important. Work for some more years.

World is the best teacher. You have to learn a lot. Do not be hasty. Youthful buoyancy, juvenile enthusiasm, may not help much. This line is an arduous, hazardous path.

I am only a common Sadhu. I may not be able to help you much. Further, I do not make disciples. I can be your sincere friend till the end of my life. I don't like to keep persons by my side for a long time. I give lessons for a couple of months and ask them to meditate in some solitary places in Kashmir or Uttarakashi.

I again reiterate. Join the Ramakrishna Mission, a wonderful place for spiritual gain. Bear difficulties. The end is immortality, infinite Ananda. Save money. Money is needed even for Sannyasins in these days.

Wishing you Peace and Kaivalya Moksha (final Beatitude), a prosperous, happy, bright New Year (1931).

P.S. Cheer yourself. Be free, courageous, fearless. You are nectar's son.

Hari Om Tat Sat. Develop patience. Speak Truth. Control anger. Develop Titiksha. Serve. Love. Give. Forgive others' faults. Speak little, but sweetly. —17-1-1931.

Programme of Life

I have returned from a long Kailas Trip. I am in due receipt of your kind letter I congratulate you on your bold spiritual adventure. It bespeaks very high of you. You have done a very good thing (in joining the Ramakrishna Mission). May God give you spiritual strength and redoubled force in your efforts to realise Brahman. You have cut asunder all the earthly ties. Now you can proceed unhampered in your way. Stick to the Mission and serve all your elders with respect and sincerity and disinterestedness. Speak truth at any cost. Speaking truth cannot harm anybody. It gives spiritual power. Truth can be achieved only by speaking truth. Control anger by developing patience, Kshama, cosmic love, service and Daya. You must cultivate humility, magnanimity (Udarata) and courage.

Six hours study, six hours meditation, etc., must go on uninterruptedly. Forget the past. Live in the solid present. Give up all sorts of fancied expectations. Even if people persecute you, hate you, mock at you, keep quiet. Don't revenge. Study 'Sermon on the Mount' daily (St. Matthew) before you proceed to work. I shall quote one passage. If you remember this once daily, it will give you Moksha. Practise it at all costs unceasingly. "Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you and pray for those who despiseth and persecute you." The practice is difficult but must be done and can be done. This is being practised by Mahatma Gandhi. This is the secret of his success. —(Swargashram 1931)

Twenty Instructions

Get up 4 a.m. Have a meditation room under lock and key. Do not allow anybody to enter. Have a Gayatri picture and Gita, etc. Meditate on Gayatri with meaning. Concentrate on Trikuti—space between two eye-brows, with closed eyes. Sit on Padma Asana. Try to sit for two hours daily. Practise. Study Gita regularly. Speak Truth at any cost. Control anger. Serve poor persons, the sick and saints. Spend Re. 1 monthly on charity. Do not join with worldly persons. Serve, love and respect everybody. Give up Ninda (criticism), back-biting, fault-finding, tale-bearing. Be humble. Be obedient to superiors. Speak sweetly. You will enter into peace. Observe Mauna for one hour on holidays. —16-8-1930.

The First Step

You are Atman. You are Immortal. Be fearless. Assert the Majesty of your Self. Be free from the deceptions of the mind and worldly objects.

You are a man of spiritual Samskaras. Nurture them. Protect them. Increase them. Do not come here. Manage to get entry in Sri Aurobindo

Ghosh's Ashram at Pondicherry or Ramakrishna Mission. You will improve there decidedly. Stick to any of them like a leech.

If you can manage and if you are quite sure, you will not become a menace to society and if you can control lust, be a Brahmachari till the end of life (Naishtika Brahmachari). You are poorly paid. How can you manage a family and children? That will bar your spiritual progress.

Mere juvenile enthusiasm will not do. Mere emotions will not do in the spiritual line. It is not a rosy path. It is full of thorns, scorpions and snakes. The path is rugged, precipitous, extremely difficult, but easy for a man of strong determination, "I must realise—I will give up my life." A strong thirst for Knowledge is needed.

Develop Sattvic virtues slowly; patience to counteract anger, contentment to check greed, service (Seva-Bhav) to destroy pride and arrogance. Develop humility, truth-speaking, Titiksha (bearing pain, heat and cold). Love all. Be kind to all. Never become irritated, excited.

Keep a diary of spiritual progress. Record everything.

Live amidst developed persons. Visit Ramakrishna Mission. Serve elders there with enthusiasm, love and affection (deep). Clear your doubts.

Wishing you peace and beatitude. Hari Om Tat Sat. In future send me stamps for my reply.—29-8-1930.

* * *

A. Fear not. B. grieve not. C. Repent not. D. Regret not.

You are Sat-Chit-Ananda Rupa Amrita Atman. You are not this Jada body.

Save money as much as possible. Put it in postal Cash Certificates for 5 years. It will bring good interest.

In these days money is needed even for Sannyasins, as there is lack of sympathy from householders. Attend Ramakrishna Math at Mylapore. Have these two important pleasure centres: “Study and Meditation”. Cut off all external pleasure centers.

(1) Search. Understand. Realise.

(2) Analyse (objects). Realise (their true nature) and Abandon.

(3) Know Thyself and be free.

(4) Always be Self-centred.

(5) Pray and be virtuous.

(6) Aspire and draw.

(7) Negate (body) and Assert (Brahman).

(8) Tat Tvam Asi, my Dear Jaya. —3-10-1930.

* * *

Kindly stay in Swarga Ashram for some days. You will enjoy the solitude and spiritual vibration undoubtedly. Stay with Swami Sat-chit-ananda. Tell my name. He will accommodate you. He will serve you. There is another Sri Swami Balanandaji in Kutia 31. He will help you till I come there. Ascertain please my address from the Post Master, Rishikesh, and communicate to me of your arrival. That will be nice. Kindly have Darshan of Swami Advaitanandaji and Tapovan Swamiji also. They are very good Sannysins. Go to Brahmapuri forest and see Sri Swami Purushottamanandaji. They are all my intimate friends.

Another point. Kindly listen.

Do not be hasty in leaving the world. World is an arena for developing various Sattvic qualities. World is the best teacher for those who want to be benefited. Remain there for some time longer. Earn and enjoy virtuous life and save. Vairagya comes out of Bhoga. Then it will be strong, steady and intense. Do not Marry. That is a different point. World is not hell. It is all Ananda when Ego and Raga-dvesha die away. Change the mental attitude. Come and see all these holy places and persons. That will inspire you, but do not leave the world so soon.

Spritual path is not at all rosy. It is full of thorns. —12-12-1930.

LECTURES ON SIVA'S LIFE

[Early in 1952 Sri Swami Paramanandaji delivered a number of highly interesting lectures on Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's early Sannyasa-fife and the striking traits of divinity that characterised his daily life. The salient features of those lectures are given in the following pages.]

The Genesis Of The Ashram

(Lecture delivered on 19th March 1952)

Last year in Madras a branch of the Divine Life Society was established and there, to get co-operation for the Divine Mission, I enlisted the support of many enthusiastic and learned people. I myself volunteered to become the Secretary of the Society. So they asked me to speak there. They knew I was with Swamiji from a long time, and wanted to learn a lot about Swamiji. Therefore, I used to speak on Swamiji every Sunday for about an hour.

What are the lessons to be got from Swamiji for quick spiritual progress according to the taste of the individual in his own position? How can a man attain quick progress? I collected impressive lessons from Swamiji's books. Many people appreciated them. If I say the same thing here now it will be of no use to you all, because all our Sadhakas and Brahmacharis here are having close contact with Swamiji and are being benefited by his presence. So I thought of talking to you about Swamiji's own life. On this subject I can talk even for a whole year.

Whatever Swamiji is doing, are they for the good of the Sadhakas or are they for their ruin? You will find everything is ulta (reverse) in Ananda Kutir. We have the Yoga Vedanta Forest University which is supposed to be run on the ideals of Gurukula-Vasa of old times. Are we leading a life of that type? No. In Gurukula-Vasa the disciples go out for Bhiksha

for their Guru and for themselves. Here it is just the reverse. In Gurukula, before starting their work in the morning every disciple must go and prostrate before the Guru. Here it is not so. Everything is ulta here.

I was not accustomed to talking at all in the past. After the establishment of the Madras branch of the Divine Life Society, however, I became very talkative. When I hear ignorant people, who have absolutely no touch with Swamiji, say that he is not great, how could. I keep quiet? I tested Swamiji throughout his all-India tour. Thousands and lakhs of people used to gather only for Swamiji's Darshan. When I have actually seen the greatness of Swamiji, I cannot tolerate the talks of the ignorant people. Swamiji will ask me to keep quiet. It is not possible for me. On many occasions Swamiji wanted to prevent me because he thought that I might injure the feelings of other important workers here and that the work might suffer.

I came to Rishikesh in my young age. I had the ideal of a Yogi having a long beard, doing Tapas, moving about to Kailash, Badri, Gangotri, and so on. But whenever I hinted at pilgrimage to any of these places, Swamiji said: "Do not be in a hurry. There is time for it." He was instructing Sadhakas in reading the Gita, the Ramayana, the Upanishads, in morning meditation and so on according to the taste and age of the people. He never asked me to meditate. I thought I was not fit for it and I did not complain. He was asking the aspirants to proceed according to their standard and progress. Many people do meditation at Brahmamuhurta. I also tried, but it was a failure. I would just get sleep! Even meditation on Daya, Dharma, mercy, etc., I could do only for say, two seconds. To practise concentration, to find out one's own defects, to develop the divine qualities in man—all this takes pretty long period.

For any aspirant who leaves his home and comes to Rishikesh there are places established by generous people like Kali Kamli Wala Kshetra to stay on. There is no one to question you nor anyone to supervise your work. People have perfect freedom. I have actually seen how elderly Sannyasins also play with monkeys—pouring coal-tar at their faces and tying barbed wire round their necks! Swamiji, on the other hand, feeds the monkeys.

You should be regular in your Sadhana, Yogic exercises etc. You should have regular programme. But Swamiji asks us to use our commonsense in everything. One day you may have some trouble in your body. In such a case if you say you must stick to your programme and do the exercises as usual you will turn mad. Sri Ramakrishna also said: "Suppose you are to file a case against a man in a court, you cannot immediately purchase Law Books worth Rs. 5,000 and fight the case. You pay Rs. 10 or so to a lawyer and get the case fought". Similarly, we should follow the instructions of our Guru. Progress is definitely ensured. We are prepared to bow before a stone or a picture or even a donkey, but not to another man; that is the height of our ego. Our mind is so constructed that I can see only evil in you and not the greatness. Why all these young aspirants who run away from the world in search of spiritual awakening are misled? It is because there is no man to care for them or to guide them. Our Swamiji has the unlimited patience to train such men up. He leaves you entirely free to do anything you like. He is confident that one day or the other you will be an asset to the world. In the beginning Swamiji used to say that he would not allow anybody to stay with him. He used to say "I will give lessons and you must go to Uttarakashi, Gangotri or Yamunotri and do Tapas there". Later on he saw what is going on in Rishikesh—so many young men coming there and going astray and having a terrible downfall. Swamiji felt that this must be remedied. He

decided that their energy should be properly utilised for the good of the country. He felt the necessity for an organisation for the Sannyasins. That is why this big scheme was started. When he started the Divine Life Society, Swamiji said that even if there is something evil in a man there is no harm. We will do our best for him. There are so many good qualifications essential for a spiritual aspirant namely, Viveka, Vairagya, etc. But Swamiji says that if a man has good health that itself is a wonderful qualification. He is now inviting the whole world to the Ashram. Every day ten new faces I find and Swamiji is not satisfied yet. He is making provision for more. In a talk at Madras some one remarked that Swamiji must retire now. He has written enough. I said in reply that Swamiji's mission has not started as yet. Swamiji wants a particular type and a particular number of people to fulfill his mission. From hundreds he may perhaps select only ten or so. He wants many more centres of the Divine Life Society outside. He has established over 300 centres now. It is not all of these that are first-rate or up-to-the-mark. Perhaps a few of them are very fine centres. Yet new branches are continuously being established.

Swamiji is ready to train any number of persons. But I find that many of them are not giving him a chance. We have our own ways. If he wants to make me a Jivanmukta, I say no. I am not prepared for it. How we can make ourselves fit? How Swamiji will have mercy on us and make us fit? What we see today, the Sivananda Publication League, the Temple etc., are only a foundation for a greater mission. These are not perfect, nor complete, nor are they the final goal. We must, however, allow him to mould us suitably for the divine purpose. We do not have the proper qualifications. How to get them?

At Swargashram was Swamiji taking Huntley & Palmers' biscuits, butter, coffee and tea? Nobody could think of tea or coffee in those days.

I have seen many famous Sannyasins from Punjab and U.P. at Swargashram having only two Borries (gunny bags) with hay. That was their Kambal. Nowadays I do not get sleep without a quilt and blanket. What a simple and austere life Swamiji had! The main point is how to restrain our senses and fix our mind upon the ideal. I read a small article in the Forest University Weekly on 'How to develop intense concentration'. Let it be through a Japa Maala or by cutting vegetables. We must learn the knack of concentration. Swamiji is deadly against evil habits, back-biting, etc. I have read it in many of his magazines also. Everywhere he stresses on this point. You may go to extremes in striving for a number of days at concentration and end up by having a break- down. It is of no use.We must try to follow what life Swamiji was leading in the early days. We have to prepare the ground. Then we can work with him and understand on what lines he is going. Many people do not know how many departments we have in the Ashram, and perhaps even authorities do not know how many inmates we have here! We must contribute our mite for the betterment of the Society; one may do it with money, another by manual labour and a third by typing and so on. Are we doing it? Perhaps not even for a few minutes in a day. We must do it at least for a few hours in the day. Simply by Japa and Mantras or Parayana we cannot attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi. For that we must come closer to Swamiji. Here the moment we see Swamiji coming by that side, we try to hide ourselves or escape by another side, because he may give us some work. We avoid him and do not give him a chance to train us. If we take even a little interest, not only shall we derive immense benefit ourselves, but it will assist many others also. If I tell him that I want to go to Badri or Madras, he will say why should you go, stay on here. His desire is that everyone should stay here and develop his faculties by learning to speak, reading the various books, doing office work or so on and in course of time when all our evil thoughts die away,

we become fit for the divine purpose and through that we bring spiritual benefits to many others.

Swamiji has once said that if you present some paltry things to the so-called Sadhus of today, they will start quarrelling over that thing. That is their mentality. By training these people on the proper lines I will do the greatest service to the country. We should, therefore, give him only a chance to put us in the proper line. If we go one step forward, God will come to you 20 steps. If you have that attitude, Swamiji will come closer; he has the greatest love for us and takes every interest in our spiritual enlightenment.

At Madras I heard someone saying that Swamiji is the cheapest body in spiritual line. I do not want to disclose the identity of that person. Swamiji also knows him. I said in reply, yes. There is no harm. Who can become cheaper than himself? Swamiji could easily remain at his Kutir without moving from there for anything. There are hundreds of people to go to him and to attend to all his work. Still, why is he taking all the trouble? Just to come down to us and lift us up, he is himself becoming the cheapest! In North India Swamiji is the cheapest Mahatma.

There is a place in Madras where young girls and women who have fallen into evil ways are reclaimed and given training to enable them to lead a better life. Srimati Lakshmi, M.A., L.T., is the Superintendent of that institution. She had to make some report about the institution and she approached many educational authorities and other prominent people for it. Everyone refused. Dewan Bahadur K.S. Ramaswami Sastri, however, gave a series of lectures and many people began to criticise him. Sri Ramaswami Sastri undertook this work subjecting himself to various criticism (even to the extent of being called as the cheapest man in South India), only to lift the unfortunate sisters.

Similarly Swamiji is mixing with us when there are thousands of people to worship him. It is not for his pleasure. It is just to lift us up.

Siva's Supreme Delight

(Lecture delivered on 20th March 1952)

I lived with three or four persons who were running spiritual institutions. I had slight disappointments. I had served in several worldwide spiritual organisations. I worked twenty-four hours there. Yet I was not peaceful. I had my own grievances. Later on I had almost come to the conclusion that all spiritual leaders were hypocrites.

In 1929 I saw Swami Sivanandaji's book "Practice of Yoga" in the Connemara Library, Madras. I had one craving; I wanted to have his Darshan once. At the same time, when I had had such disappointments at other places, I thought that Swami Sivanandaji also should be a bogus spiritual leader!

I came to Rishikesh to attack Swami Sivanandaji, saying: "You are ruining the country and spoiling the minds of young people. What is this 'nectar of Immortality' about which you are writing? You are tempting the young men with these charming words and spoiling their career."

I had other charges also against him. I wanted to point out the inconsistency in his teachings. At one place he says: "You all come and taste the nectar of Immortality." At another place he says: "I don't allow anybody to remain with me. I will give instructions; they will have to go to Uttarakashi or Gangotri" and become mad!! What else? Supposing a man knows all about the practice of Yoga, theoretically, and then secludes himself in Uttarakashi: either he will become utterly Tamasic or he will turn mad.

I joined the Swargashram and lived with Swamiji. I was wearing white cloth. Then I was lean, small mischievous boy. (My present robust health I owe to Swamiji's influence.)

Where to get food? The Kshetras will give food only to Gerua-clad people. I was in white cloth. But Swamiji was kind enough to go to the Kshetra and say: "He is a young Brahmachari, undergoing training in Yoga; kindly give him food." The Kshetra manager said: "Come after all the Mahatmas have been given their Bhiksha; I will give you also." He gave me Bhiksha as an exception only because of Swamiji's recommendation. After ten days he stopped with an "Om Namo Narayanaya, Brahmachariji."

Swamiji said: "Become a Sannyasi." I hesitated. Sannyasa is a spiritual wedding. You can't play with it. Once you accept someone as your Guru and take Sannyasa from him, you should stick to him throughout your life. You should not change. You should not give up that Sannyasa. In my case, I was undecided. Supposing, later, I found a greater Siddha Purusha than Swamiji? Supposing, later I found that Swamiji was not worthy of being my Guru. I could change if I were free. I could accept that Siddha Purusha as my Guru. If I had already taken Sannyasa from Swamiji, I could not do that. If, for the sake of two Rotties from the Kshetra, I took Sannyasa from Swamiji, then my quest for the best Siddha Purusha would stop there. Therefore, I refused to take Sannyasa. Again Swamiji went to the Kshetra and recommended that I should be given Bhiksha even though I was in white clothes.

I passed six months in Swargashram like this; and during this period Swamiji had to go twenty times to the Kshetra.

There were only three young boys serving Swamiji at that time—Prakash, Vivekananda and myself. I was not satisfied. I wanted to gather

more people around Swamiji: So that I could have the satisfaction that, whether Swamiji is a Siddha Purusha or not, I was not the only one to become his disciple.

There was a very learned man living nearby; he was well-read in English, Hindi and Sanskrit. The Swargashram authorities were trying to persuade him to take Sannyasa and live in the Ashram. I was trying to make him become Swamiji's disciple. He had a wife and a daughter. One day, during a conversation, I tried to convince him that he had done his duty towards his family and that he could then take Sannyasa, from Swamiji. He said: "If you take Sannyasa, I also will take." For his sake I agreed. Then he said: "Please ask Swamiji if he will give us Sannyasa." I knew Swamiji's heart! I told him: "There is no need. I assure you he will give us Sannyasa. Shall we take Sannyasa tomorrow?"

Swamiji would not generally come out of his Kutir before 9 a.m. How could I convey our desire to him the nest morning? I devised a plan. I wrote a memorandum and stuck it on his doorway.

We were in the Dharmashala at about 9 a.m. Swamiji came running, with that note in his hand: "Where is that thief!" Some one told him that I was making a garland inside the room. He shouted "No, no: no garland is necessary. The barber is ready. Call him quickly." I ran forward and prostrated. We went to his Kutir.

He had kept the barber inside and locked the outer door of his Kutir! He had himself sent for the barber and ensured that he would not slip out when Swamiji was searching for his disciples! Then, a clean shave. We were both Sannyasins—Paramananda and Swaroopananda.

You cannot find another Mahatma like Swamiji in the whole world.

With other Mahatmas the case is entirely different. You have to go through all sorts of formalities: you have to worship the Mahatma and

beg for Sannyasa. Then you have to serve him like a coolie and look after his buffaloes.But Swamiji had himself arranged for the barber and was running here and there to call us! That shows Swamiji's great anxiety to encourage young men to embrace the order of Sannyasa. When young men come forward and express the least desire to renounce the world, Swamiji is delighted. He says: "All auspicious things must be done immediately." And he initiates the young man at once into the Holy Order. That is his supreme delight.

The Greatest Second Renunciation Of Siva

(Lecture delivered on 21st March 1952)

Within a very short time after his arrival at the Swarga Ashram, Swamiji earned a very good name and fame. Even in those days the Swarga Ashram people treated him as a great saint. Punjabi and U.P. Mahatmas-advanced Mahatmas, who used to do Kathas in Tulasi Ramayana and hold discourses on Panchadasi, etc., all of them used to admire and worship him.

Swamiji even in those days was keen on arranging for Satsanga. He would invite learned people and Mahatmas. He would request all the inmates of the Swarga Ashram to join. He would keep garlands ready for the Katha-Vachaks or Mahatmas who had agreed to give a discourse. Sometimes he would also arrange for "Prasad" at the end. He would not speak at these Satsangas; occasionally he would sing some Kirtans.

The Swarga Ashram people used to send all visitors to Swamiji's Kutir, saying: "He is the only great Mahatma and Yogi in the Swarga Ashram." When the numbers of admirers and devotees grew to an unmanageable number and when they started disturbing him at all hours of the day, Swamiji put up a fence around his Kutir and asked me, when I was at Madras, to bring a chick for him through which he could see but could

not himself be seen. He was doing rigorous Tapasya in Swarga Ashram and would not spend uselessly even one second of his time. He wanted to avoid curiosity-mongers. But if sick persons were to come to his Kutir, he would immediately come out and serve them.

Though honoured as a very great saint, Swamiji himself led an extremely austere life in the Swarga Ashram. He never allowed any of his disciples to do him the least bit of service. Sometimes he would have to go to Haridwar, Dehra Dun. He would carry big bundles on his own shoulders. If a young Sannyasi said to him: "Swamiji, let me carry that bundle," Swamiji would merely look at him and say: "U-hum", and such was his Tejas the young man would simply run away! I once protested against his going to the Kshetra for Bhiksha. He at once replied: "It is an honour for a Sannyasi to take Madhukari Bhiksha or Kshetra Bhiksha."

Every day new aspirants joined Swamiji, with the intention of pursuing the Nivritti Marga. Swamiji also was ready to train them. There was an obstacle. According to the rules of the Swarga Ashram, no resident Sadhu was allowed to have more than two monk-disciples.

Swamiji, therefore, had to leave the Swarga Ashram in the interests of his disciples—and now we know, in the interests of millions of aspirants and laymen throughout the world. The Swarga Ashram authorities offered so many additional comforts, a separate palatial building, special privileges, etc., etc. But nothing could hold back Swamiji. He renounced a comfortable and peaceful Sadhu's life in Swarga Ashram and took up residence on the right bank of the Ganga, near Ram Ashram. Kalikamli Wala Kshetra was miles away. Bhiksha had to be got from there. There was no habitable room at all in the entire locality. Swamiji was content to live in a dungeon in the interest of service of the Lord's children. Now we know that it was in accordance with the Divine plan. We too had a faint glimpse of it at that time; we noticed in Swamiji a fiery desire to

serve the whole world; he was ever thinking; "What to do for the humanity? How to penetrate every heart and home? How to throw light on the aspirants' path and how to remove the obstacles and difficulties that beset the path of a Sadhaka? Even while he was in Swarga Ashram he had brought out a few books, "Practice of Yoga" among them. This book contained beautiful solutions to all the problems of Sadhakas. It had roused many people.

And, to serve them more effectively and in freedom, Swamiji gave up his smooth and comfortable life in Swarga Ashram and plunged himself afresh in difficulties and privations, and voluntarily took upon himself the burden of training Sadhakas unmindful of the disturbance and difficulties that this meant. I consider this renunciation of the highest degree, even greater than his renunciation of position, power and prestige, earlier in life, when he left Malaya.

Siva's Psychological Insight

(Lecture delivered on 22nd March 1952)

Even in his Swargashram days when there was no typewriter, no office, and no conveniences of any sort, Swamiji used to write letters and articles on Yoga and Vedanta and send to several Journals for publication.

Swamiji would write an article of three or four pages. He would need three or four copies for sending to different Journals. He would quietly come to me and ask me to take a copy. I would gladly do it. The next day I would find Prakash copying the very thing. On a third day, it would be Vivekananda's turn! If he had told me "I want three copies of this article", I would have refused and run away out of disgust! Swamiji had understood human psychology to such an extent! Moreover, by this

wonderful method, he had ensured that all of us had the first chance of reading his inspiring articles.

I would take the original and the copy at about 2 in the afternoon. I would want to leave them there and run away. But whatever Swamiji might be doing then, he would stop his work and would want to have the article compared with the original and the mistakes corrected then and there. I did not know Sanskrit; and Swamiji's articles would contain a Sanskrit word in every line. I would struggle to read them: Swamiji would take that as an opportunity to teach me. The words "Kutastha" and "Titiksha" were the first words I learnt from him in this manner. That would also serve him as an opportunity to explain the significance and the real import of those words to me. Wonderful combination of work, Upadesha and Sadhana.

Siva: The Easy Prey Of The Cheat

(Lecture delivered on 23rd March, 1952)

Mercy, compassion, love and tolerance were born with Sri Swami Sivanandaji. During his Tapasya period at Swarga Ashram I noticed them. People from Singapore who were connected with him there, say that he had all those qualities during that period, too. And, his boyhood friends say that those qualities were present in him in his earliest life. Today you find the same qualities in him, only on a larger scale.

Satchidananda from Kumbhakonam approached Swamiji for Sannyasa in 1925. Swamiji refused. Then Satchidananda went to Kedar, Badri, etc., and came back with a long beard. Then again he approached Swamiji: "I am helpless. What can I do? Kindly initiate me into Sannyasa." He was an ordinary cook neither fit for studying Brahma Sutras nor for the practice of Hatha Yoga. He could not undertake severe

austerities, either. Anyhow, he was helpless: and Swamiji gave him Sannyasa, out of compassion.

Swamiji was then living as an ordinary Sadhu. He had some money, I heard: but he never used it for his own comforts and conveniences, that money was meant for a Mission! This Satchidananda had a little craving for tamarind and chutney. Every few days he would approach Swamiji under some pretext. He would say: "Swamiji! I am sick. I am shivering with fever." Swamiji would give him four annas for taking hot tea. He would pretend to walk like a sick man till he goes out of Swamiji's sight and then run to a shop and purchase some tamarind, chillies, etc., to prepare chutney. I knew he was not sick and that he was pretending. But Swamiji took it seriously; he would not suspect anybody. Moreover, Swamiji was his Guru; he could very well have advised the old man to give the craving for chutney! No: on the contrary Swamiji encouraged him. When the stock of chutney-groceries ran out, Satchidananda would come back to Swamiji with a little bit of chutney and ask Swamiji to taste it. Swamiji would at once understand the purpose and call out to Satchidanandaji: 'Oh Swamin! Here is a small present for you', and give him four or eight annas for purchasing tamarind and chillies!

Even today people go on cheating Swamiji. Yet, his love is unlimited and he showers his love, grace and blessings on everybody.

Serve The Wicked Man First

(Lecture delivered on 24th March 1952)

An old man came to Swamiji when he was in the Swargashram. After some days he told Swamiji: "Swamiji! I had a dream last night in which I saw my Guru; he asked me that I should initiate you into Sannyasa. You can fix a date and I will give you the proper initiation."

Swamiji smilingly told him: “Maharaj, I am the disciple of Swami Viswanandaji Maharaj. I have already received Sannyasa-Diksha.”

A few days later the same old man came back to Swamiji and begged to be initiated into Sannyasa, as the Kshetra would not give him Bhiksha without initiation into Sannyasa. The man who wanted to become Swamiji’s Guru became his disciple!

This new disciple (Swami Brahmananda) one day approached Swamiji and said; “I have seen ‘the other side’ of Vedanta. I know everything. Now, therefore, give me the title, of Vedanta Kesari.” Swamiji immediately declared: “Yes, yes, you are a Vedanta Kesari.” Next day the Swami went from Kutir to Kutir in Swarga Ashram and bragged: “Swami Sivanandaji has made me a Vedanta Kesari.”

We were three youngsters serving Swamiji in those days: Prakash, Vivekananda and myself. But Swamiji would never allow us to do any personal service like washing his clothes or sweeping his Kutir: he would do all that himself. On the other hand, he would ask us to choose some old Mahatma or other of Swargashram and serve him. This Swami Brahmananda fell to my lot.

One day when I was taking water to his Kutir, Swami Brahmananda said during a conversation: “Swami Sivanandaji does not know anything of Vedanta. I know everything. I can teach you. Give him up. Become my disciple.” From that day I never entered his Kutir.

This Brahmananda himself was Swamiji’s disciple! and, even when Swamiji knew that Brahmananda was talking ill of him, he would ask us to serve the old man and confer the title of Vedanta Kesari on him!

The funniest thing was that Brahmananda had so much confidence in Swamiji that when his life's end was nearing, he deposited some money with Swamiji for giving a Bhandara on the day he passed away!

Siva's Disciple Belongs To Humanity

(Lecture delivered on 25th March 1952)

Once Swami Omkar who returned from America visited Swargashram with his disciple Sushila. She is an American lady. They stayed in one Dharamsala and Swamiji used to go and see them. When visitors came there, Swamiji used to ask us to give books to them. Though it is stated that Swamiji was plunged in deep Tapas there were all his activities. He used to play with children and used to talk humorously. He used to receive guests and visitors and attend to their comforts and conveniences. During the period of Swamiji's meditation, he never allowed anybody to disturb him. Swamiji used to receive the visitors between 1 to 4 in the evening. Swami Omkar visited Swargashram. There were only three men. We had to dance before the Swamiji. Swamiji will ask whether you have brought hot water and other things. Omkarji was surprised by the training given by Swamiji to his disciples. When Omkarji wanted some disciple, Swamiji said "take anybody." He suggested "Swami Paramananda". Swamiji willingly agreed. Omkarji was surprised to see the training given by Swamiji to his disciples. Swamiji asked me to go. I was helpless. Swamiji felt for separation and he used to write good letters. In a letter published in 'My Magazine', it has been reported that Swamiji works for all organisations whether the Divine Life Society or any other organisation. He will also give due respects to all Sadhus. In other institutions, the management and Mahants will not allow the disciples either to pay respects to other Sadhus or observe their birthdays.

The Never-Suspecting Master

(Lecture delivered on 26th March 1952)

Suspicion is prominent by its absence in Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Even if a person is well-known for his wickedness, Swamiji will not suspect him! Even before the Divine Life Society was established, in 1933-35, when we had practically no money at all and were living on Kshetra Bhiksha, there was a Sannyasin-disciple of Swamiji (let us call him X Y) who had the unfortunate habit of stealing money and other things. Once he stole money from Swamiji's own Kutir! The next morning, Swamiji came to me and casually asked me: "Have you, seen the money kept in the purse?' I replied: "No, Swamiji." "All right, drop the subject," he said and then forgot all about it. Beyond this routine enquiry, he never ever expressed his suspicion of anyone.

This X Y went to Lahore for printing some Sankirtan bulletins for distribution at a Sankirtan Conference. The organisers printed 1,000 copies; he asked the press to charge, for 3,000! The organisers paid for the travelling expenses of four persons, including Swamiji Maharaj. X Y pocketed it and never told any of us. Swamiji never depended upon the organisers; be came away to Rishikesh. Even afterwards, he never opened that topic.

Swamiji's one great ambition from the earliest Sannyasa days has been to inspire as many young men as possible to lead the Nivritti-Life. He would invite young aspirants to join the Ashram, and protect them like a mother so that they might evolve rapidly. This X Y had the knack of driving people away! At onetime he commanded great power in the Ashram. He would say to an inmate: "I had a talk with Swamiji today; he asked me to tell you that from tomorrow you can make your own

arrangements to stay elsewhere." The poor man would think Swamiji was displeased with him and go away. The next morning X Y would tell Swamiji: "Swamiji! they are a set of lazy fellows. They don't want to do any work. This man simply took his clothes and walked away last night. I even asked him to remain, but he won't listen!" "All right, let him go," Swamiji would say; but he would never suspectXY or anybody for the matter of that.

Swamiji's mind is like a pure crystal; whatever you place before it, will be reflected in it.

Swamiji's breadth of vision is summed up in his own words beautifully: "Even the gods cannot find out the real culprit. We should not suspect anyone. We should not judge anyone. God alone knows the truth!" Even when a person's crime is proved, Swamiji would brush it aside saying: "Oh, it is nothing!" Even if a man's external behaviour has been undesirable, Swamiji would assert that his motive might have been pure! Swamiji's sympathy is unlimited; his forgiveness is boundless; his love is cosmic.

Loving Resistance To Temptations

(Lecture delivered on 27th March 1952)

The story commenced in 1934-35. Swami Sivanandaji was then living in the dilapidated four-roomed "Ananda Kutir", where the Hospital is at present. Swamiji would rarely move out of Rishikesh. He did not even like to come out of his Kutir. He emphatically said: "I never move out. I do not like to keep any disciples with me."

Several people from the Punjab and other places used to come frequently to Ananda Kutir and request Swamiji to preside over the Sankirtan Conferences at various centres. Their visits to the Ashram would reveal

to us Swamiji's infinite patience. All kinds of people would surround him. One man would be crying. Another man will be pouring out his grievances before him. Yet another organiser would be persuading Swamiji to attend the Conference. Swamiji, in the midst of all this, would go on writing letters and articles. In one word he would have disposed of all these people: "I am not coming", and then whatever they say he would pay no attention to.

Very often (almost always) the devotees won. They were able to persuade Swamiji to attend the Sankirtan Sammelans and preside over them. The organisers observed something unique in Swamiji. He always observed the taste and the mood of the people and gave them lectures and Bhajans according to their taste. If the people were a little inattentive or sleepy, at that time Swamiji used to sing "Gopia Vallabha-Radhe Shyam"; a few thousands of people would stand up and dance like mad men. Some would ascend the dais and dance with Swamiji.

One lady followed Swamiji to one of these Conferences and afterwards she put on the Gerua cloth and said: "Swamiji, in your name I have taken Sannyasa as your disciple." Very soon she styled herself as "Jaganmatha" and started an Ashram of her own! Swamiji said 'Very good' and did not question her conduct.

Another lady, let us call her X, also attended one of these Conferences. Shortly after this she lost her husband. She was restless and therefore came to Rishikesh and stayed near the Ashram. She told Swamiji: "I have got four or five thousand rupees worth of jewels and I have got a house also. I want to stay here permanently. If you permit me, I will dispose of the jewels and house." Swamiji replied: "Keep the house and the jewels with you. You may stay at Brindavan." Swamiji gave a letter of introduction to a very good Sadhu at Brindavan and sent her away. He also instructed her: "Tour the nearby villages. Spread the glory of the

Lord's Name. Conduct Kirtan in every house. Teach the young children."

For sometime she followed Swamiji's instructions. Then she had some mental suffering. She came to Rishikesh. She started making amorous advances to Swamiji! Through the window she would throw some scent on Swamiji's bed. When Swamiji opened the door of the Kutir she would come in and sit near Swamiji. He would go on with his work, without even thinking that she was there. After some time she would go away of her own accord. Swamiji could well have asked her to clear out. But, no, he would not cause the least hurt to anyone. He is full of love for all.

When this trouble grew intense, Swamiji asked us to put up a barbed wire-fencing around his Kutir. When she found the fencing around Swamiji's Kutir, she often grew wild with frenzy. She used to throw stones at Swamiji's Kutir. Swamiji even then kept silent. After some time she went away.

After some years she came to Rishikesh in a Sannyasin's robe. She had grown old, too. Swamiji is never swayed by prejudices. "She might have changed. Everyone evolves every second. We should not judge anyone by his past conduct," that is Swamiji's guiding principle. He allowed her to stay somewhere near the Ashram. She used to go to Rishikesh Bazaar every day and sing before every shop for some time all sorts of nonsense about Swamiji. She even abused him in public. In the evening she would come to the Ashram. Swamiji would send her fruits and almonds.

We who had been watching all this from the very beginning, had a marvellous lesson in the consequent of Raga-Dvesha. Swamiji was not tempted by this lady's wealth or youth. When she threw stones at him

and abused him, he did not retaliate nor even mind it; he ever entertained even a thought of hatred towards her.

Another incident opened our eyes to another great aspect of Swamiji's personality. A Grihastha had taken Sannyasa from Swamiji. A lady who was related to him was also staying with him. The way he moved with her made us feel that she was his sister, though we learnt later that she was his wife in Purvashram. This man was anxious that Swamiji should take good, delicious and nutritious food, and wanted that that lady should cook for Swamiji. With this motive, he even dissuaded the Ashram inmates from preparing food, telling them that a Sannyasin should not approach fire. But, Swamiji stubbornly refused. He explained that one should never pamper the tongue. "Do not run after delicious or nutritious food. Control the tongue. If the tongue is controlled, you will be able to control all other senses easily." The lady had to go away. That was Swamiji's principle. He asks us not to neglect the body, but never to lead a luxurious life. That is the secret that we should understand clearly. Even the kitchen Swamiji started in the Ashram in order that we need not waste our time in going to Rishikesh Kshetras for our Bhiksha and utilise that time in service.

Siva's Exile

(Lecture delivered on 28th March 1952)

Today I shall talk to you about the Vanavasa of Sri Swamiji Maharaj. Swamiji might say that he did not go for Vanavasa at all. He always lives in the future—never in the past or even in the present!

On the 18th of February 1941, Sri Swamiji Maharaj retired from the active field of the Divine Life Society. He took to seclusion again either in the deep forests of the Himalayas or in the plains on the banks of the

Holy Ganga. He left the Ashram at about 2 p.m. without the knowledge of any of the inmates, with a single cloth and two rupees in cash with him. Local people and the then inmates of the Ashram (some of whom are still here) were in the dark about the circumstances which led him to take this step. Some began to feel that Swamiji was tired of the work and disgusted, because in those days when Swamiji had the unlimited desire to serve the humanity and when he had been receiving thousands of letters from people far and near for spiritual guidance, he had in his few disciples either a blind man, an illiterate and the like, and none with real education to help him in his work as we see today. If he had at least ten educated disciples to help him in his tremendous work, perhaps he would not have gone at all.

Swamiji's exile, however, was not one which he took on a sudden impulse. It was a well-planned one. Just ten days before he left the Ashram, he forced me and Sri Narayana Swamiji (our Vice-President) to start for Lahore, immediately for the printing of a book. This was not at all so urgent a work, but just to please Swamiji, we both left for Lahore. There were only about ten inmates then of whom four or five were new-comers. After getting rid of us, ,Swamiji had absolutely no difficulty to leave on his mission without the least knowledge of those inmates.

The next day perhaps, I received a wire at Lahore from the inmates informing me that Swamiji had left suddenly and asking us to start for Rishikesh immediately. As we had been sent to Lahore for a particular work by Swamiji, I was not in favour of returning at that time. However, I requested Sri Narayana Swamiji to stay on and look after the work and started for Rishikesh to acquaint myself with the exact situation and return to Lahore for my work.

When I reached Ananda Kutir, for reasons best known to them, the inmates refused to give me the key of Swamiji's room. They said that

they had searched everything there and that there was nothing which would give any clue. I however wanted to search there to find out whether he had left any important document and with considerable difficulty, I entered the room, escorted by four or five inmates. I was well acquainted with the places, where Swamiji used to keep private papers as well as important and urgent matters. I saw in that particular place a cover addressed to me. It was the first time the other inmates also saw that letter. This was a shock to us all and all became terribly upset.

In the letter left by Swamiji he had written that he wanted rest immediately. He appointed me as President of the Divine Life Society and also made other appointments of editors and so on. He also wrote to the Bank and Post Office for the transfer of accounts and also to all the inmates requesting them to co-operate whole-heartedly with the new arrangements. The same inmates, who a moment ago refused to give me the key of Swamiji's room, now became completely mad. They would not even let me go out for passing urine for the fear that I might jump in the Ganga or commit suicide! I was stunned. I took complete rest for an hour in the Kaivalya Guha and afterwards decided to go back to Lahore again as I had promised to Narayana Swamiji. There was a complete chaos here. The inmates began their search for Swamiji, some walking miles after miles on the Ganga bank, and some in the jungles. In spite of all these chaotic conditions prevailing, we had been regular in conducting the regular daily Kirtans and Satsanga.

Nobody knew the exact reasons which led to Swamiji's exile. I began enquiring from each and everyone of the inmates whether there had been any incident which might have created displeasure in Swamiji. There was none. They could, however, give me an interesting incident. The day Swamiji left the Ashram he came to the Post Office in the morning and asked for Rs. 2/-. He had with him only a Dhoti and upper cloth. In

those days Swamiji never used to wear shoes. The months of February and March used to be extremely cold in those days. Swamiji played with the Rs. 2/ (they were silver coins) for a short while just like a young child. This was the statement given by the inmates. I do not know even today the philosophy behind it, nor have I the courage to ask Swamiji about it. As was the custom, between 12 and 3 we never used to approach Swamiji's room. In the morning also before 9 O'clock nobody dared to enter his room. So during this interval in the afternoon, while the others were either busy taking their food or resting, Swamiji left the Ashram unnoticed by anybody. He had nothing with him except his Dhoti, the upper cloth and the Rs. 2/- which he took from the Post Office that morning. He did not even take his spectacles and pen.

On his way, Sri Swami Abhayananda and some other Sannyasins met him at the Rishikesh Toll Gate. Swamiji pretended that he was observing Mauna and walked on. Later on we had reports that he spent one night in the Satyanarayana temple. In the meantime we published a small supplement of the Divine Life Magazine in consultation with Sri Narayana Swamiji. This supplement was published in the month of March 1941. If you happen to read the article we published in that Issue on the unexpected departure of Swamiji, you could very easily understand what our feelings were then. We also published there photographs of Swamiji in that issue to enable those who might come across to identify him and do what Seva they could for him. In that issue we also appealed to Swamiji to give us his Darshan at least once a year on the occasion of his birthday. He had written in the note left behind by him that "he cannot injure the feeling of anyone in any way" We appealed to him through the same magazine that he had not only wounded our feelings but had actually broken our hearts for having left the place without anything with him. If he wanted to take rest he could

have done so, taking with him enough money and some one to look after his comforts.

We also assured him that we would carry on his mission to his last word through his blessings, and requested him to let us know where he was.

I left for Lahore in the meantime to do the work which was entrusted with me there and joined Sri Narayana Swamiji. The printing of the books were completed in a short while. Coming back again to Swamiji's Vanavasa, we knew very little about his further movements. We had reports that he passed Haridwar, where he spent one night on the platform at Hari-ki-Paudi, and then continued his journey via Jwalapur walking along the canal side. Near Kankhal in the village called Jagdishpur, he was taking rest under a tree. His wonderful personality attracted the attention of the villagers. We do not know actually what happened there. One fine morning Swamiji reached back Ananda Kutir escorted by a devotee of that village in a car! Even today, once in a year he comes here for Swamiji's Darshan with sugar-cane juice, which Swamiji takes the pleasure of distributing personally to the inmates and devotees.

It was exactly on the fourteenth day of his exile that he gave his Darshan again at Ananda Kutir. This reminds us of the Ramayana episode. When Sri Rama left for his fourteen years' Vanavasa, he consoled Bharata by saying that he would finish his exile as though it were fourteen days and be with him again. Here, on the contrary, we spent the fourteen days in gloom as though it were fourteen years!

On Swamiji's return to Ananda Kutir, as I told you before, I was at Lahore. I again had a telegram from the inmates asking me to return immediately. As I was sent there by Swamiji for a particular work. I did not think it worthwhile to return then before completing the work.

Afterwards I had a wire from Swamiji himself. I immediately returned to Ananda Kutir.

Today I appeal to you all for your intense co-operation

working hard all the twenty-four hours for the spiritual mission founded by Swamiji. That alone can give him perfect satisfaction and bliss and make him live for hundreds of years guiding us and the world.

Then And Now

(Lecture delivered on 29th March 1952)

Swamiji is never particular about the capacities or qualifications or the Shad Sampat of any aspirant. Even lunatics are welcome to this Ashram. As I told you before, he is ever ready even to give initiation to anyone at any moment. His principle is that even if you go back to Grihastha life after taking initiation, you shall have a better birth next time. He gives initiation or Mantra Upadesha to anyone and creates all sorts of facilities to give him a better impetus for spiritual life. Even the most unqualified man must become perfect by mixing with the Sannyasins, attending the Satsanga and doing Japa. He says, even if you do a thing against the principles of the Ashram or against the teachings of the Gita and Upanishads, do not worry, be sincere and earnest.

In olden days when Sannyasins met they used to wish each other with the chants of Mantras such as ‘Om Namo Narayanaya’ and the like. Every Grihasthi used to prostrate before Sannyasins. Today when Swamiji meets even a young boy, he wishes in the old fashion. If we have only the patience to watch and see how Swamiji talks to visitors and clears their doubts, we shall be able to work this Divine Life Mission most wonderfully for the uplift of the whole world. Swamiji is perhaps the only saint who has seen the real fruits of his Tapas and

activities. If we are his real disciples, we must show our ability, Seva and devotion before his very eyes. There is no use of doing Sadhana and Arati at his Samadhi. If we live in our own way ignoring his words and teachings he will be most disheartened and it is high time that we should remove all those ideas and work honestly and sincerely to the words of Swamiji. That alone shall give him the greatest happiness and bliss and enable him to live in our midst for hundreds of years.

In those olden days, Swamiji would never open his door before 9 O'clock. He would be deeply engaged in his Japa and meditation. Today before 9 O'clock we are probably finishing eight cups of coffee and tea. There are many who would even sleep till 9, especially in the winter season. Swamiji is very quick in his bath, meals and all such personal works. He advises us also to practise the same. Do we follow his teachings?

Today we are using so many petromax lights. In those days I had a light made up of an ink bottle. Swamiji had a hurricane lamp, which I never used to fill for days together. Whatever little money we had in those days used to be spent on medicines for the sick. In the morning at 9 when Swamiji came out there would be some sick persons waiting for him. After attending on them he used to take his bath very quickly and then go to Kshetra covering his head and return with his Bhiksha with the least, possible delay, unnoticed. Immediately after his meals he used to sit for his writing. We had to show him all the letters before despatch. No mistake ever escaped his notice.

Swamiji is never tired of work nor does he feel lazy at any time. His teaching is that only through work you can evolve and not by Japa or Tapas even for thousands of years. He has always been very particular about the Satsahga. Even with two people he would conduct the usual Satsanga. He used to invite any learned Pundits or Sadhus visiting this

part to give lectures at the Satsanga. At the Satsanga they were garlanded and made to sit on a raised platform and after the Satsanga was over distribution of Prasad was also compulsory. Such is his dynamism and we should develop this in ourselves.

In Colombo, during the Yatra, Swamiji gave a public lecture at the Town Hall. There were about six thousand people inside the hall and outside there was not an inch of space left. The talk was relayed through the radio and the next day I heard that all the coffee clubs in Colombo had to suspend their business owing to the crowd who filled all the clubs to hear Swamiji's talk through the radio. So great was their eagerness to receive Swamiji's invaluable Upadesha and instructions, but we, who are so close to him, fail to take his Upadesha even when it is given daily. This is the great blunder of our life. If you do not correct this immediately you will have to weep in regret later on. So open your eyes. Awake fully right at this moment. Serve the Master vigorously and with full heart right now. His Grace will give you the highest Realisation.

The Sivananda Asylum

(Lecture delivered on 30th March, 1952)

Once a man with hat, boot and suit, looking like a pucca gentleman came to Swamiji. He was from Ambala. He told me he was a Tahsildar or something like that. "I want a complete set of Swamiji's books," he said. He went on enumerating his requirements: in fact, he wanted to purchase the entire Sivananda Publication League! "Are you going to pay for the whole lot here?" I asked him. He replied: "No: I will send the money from Mussoorie." I refused.

Swamiji told me: "Give-him. Give him a complete set of books. He is going to open a Library."

I said: “Swamiji!. He may cheat us.”

Swamiji’s reply was spontaneous: “No. No. It does not matter. Give him what he wants.” This gentleman wanted two big framed pictures—rare pictures illustrating the Gita-Upadesha—that were hung in the office. I refused. Swamiji said:
“Give him the pictures, too.”

Ultimately, the gentleman took books worth Rs. 180/- (in those days it meant much), those two pictures, and gramophone records, too. Swamiji was cross with me for two or three days because I did not at once give all the books and pictures to the gentleman!

We waited for fifteen days, one month, three months. Later on I found that there was no such man in Mussoorie! I went to Ambala and fought with his parents. They said: “What are we to do? We know nothing. Our son is in the mental hospital at Lahore.”

Even when the gentleman had come to Ananda Kutir, I expected that he was a mad man. But Swamiji never suspected. Swamiji encouraged even the mad man! Whether the man pretends or whether he is a bogus person, Swamiji will not care. His business is to help. He has his own way of deciding things; and that way has always proved to be the best!

The Hard Taskmaster Who Creates Talents

(Lecture delivered on 31st March 1952)

Swamiji’s disciples whom you see today are of various tastes and temperaments. You will find in them humourists, songsters, Vedantins, Hatha-Yogis and so on. Generally you will find religious institutions of this type restrict their activities to the publication of books, running of hospitals or educational institutions. But Swamiji wants to do wonders to

the world and so he requires different types of people. Once when Sri Rukmani Devi, the famous exponent of Bharata Natyam, was here she asked Swamiji how he could find out the talents of different people. But she does not know the real fact. Swamiji creates talents in us. I shall give you an example.

There was a very young boy here. He was almost blind and used to spend his time in playing with monkeys on the Ganga bank. Swamiji noticed this. This boy became very regular in attendance at Kirtans. Perhaps due to the weakness in his eyesight, the boy had very sharp ears. In a few days time he began to repeat all the Kirtans both in English and in Hindi very melodiously and Swamiji was himself wonder-struck. Now he is the leading Kirtanist and Bhajan-singer here. Today he is also the chief packer in the Society, and speaks English very fluently. Once I had the occasion to hear from Sri P. K. Vinayagam, Editor of "My Magazine", Madras, his appreciation of the way in which articles are packed here. As I told you before, I believe in organised way of managing things and was deadly against the children and others frequenting the Ashram. But see how beautifully Swamiji keeps people who would have otherwise been a burden to the country, and shapes them. He completely changes the nature of the individual in no time.

Swamiji wants every type of people here, even rogues, thieves and the sick. If a man is sick he will not send him for treatment. He considers it a sin. He wants him be looked after by the inmates. Some time ago an old inmate of the Ashram was seriously ill. We were all of the opinion of sending him to the Hospital at Rishikesh. Swamiji did not allow. He was treated and nursed here until his last days.

Swamiji has a wonderful memory power. He would remember even today things which I failed to do in 1935! He keeps a close watch over the people and extracts the maximum possible work from us and thus

makes us more useful. He keeps a sort of a memorandum book with him. That is his whip. If he gives you a work and you fail to do it, he will go on reminding you until the work is completed. Once Swamiji asked a young disciple here to write a message. The next day Swamiji reminded him. He replied that it was raining the previous day and that he would type and give it the next day. The next. day Swamiji again reminded him. He replied that that was a Sunday and that he would give it the next day. Immediately Swamiji asked him, "What reply will you give me tomorrow?" This question was sufficient for the disciple. He sat at the work and finished it! Today he is one of the most hard-working here and keeps himself fully absorbed in work. Swamiji is such a hard taskmaster.

In olden times only most faithful and close disciples had the opportunity of getting Upadesha and Mantras from the Gurus. These were kept so secretly in those days. Swamiji's ideas are quite different. He has nothing secret. His aim is to make all people Sivanandas. Unlike the sages of olden days, Swamiji is ever ready to initiate you and give you Mantra Upadesha. He has also published everything through leaflets, pamphlets, magazines and books.

When I see the innumerable number of inmates of the Ashram, each one invariably different from the other in his ways, it reminds me of a shepherd with his flock of sheep and cattle, each fighting with the other and grazing in the forest in a disorderly way. The cattle may even injure their legs in their fights, but in the evening the shepherd takes them all home safely. In the same way we have our own petty quarrels and disorders here, but Swamiji wants all of us, He is out shepherd to lead us to the Ultimate goal with his crook of love!

Swamiji was commanding the greatest respect from all even from his early days in Swargashram. As I have told you before, we were all dependent on the Kshetras for our food. We had to stand in the queue for

hours together to get our Rottis, while Swamiji was free from that botheration. Even if he were late on occasions, his fare used to be reserved by the Kshetra people and they even used to wait for his arrival before closing the doors. He was revered and respected by learned Sannyasins and Vedantins who used to visit these parts from the Punjab and other places.

Swamiji's patience is unlimited. Many visitors in those days used to ask him absurd questions. Without even the slightest sign of anger he used to hear such questions and reply them coolly. I shall give you one instance. Once a doctor from Punjab happened to meet Swamiji. He asked Swamiji: "You were a Civil Surgeon in the M.S. What made you to leave that and take this life?" Swamiji at once replied: "No, no. I was only a scavenger there!" The visitor was dumb-founded, and even today I do not know the meaning underlying Swamiji's reply.

I was a very talkative man even in early age. I therefore naturally used to attract many young men for talking. While going for Bhiksha to the Kshetra and there at the queue I used to engage myself fully in talking with them. Swamiji used to notice this. One day Swamiji called me and took me to task. He said: "You are a Sannyasin. When you go to the Kshetra I find you invariably engaged in unnecessary talking. As a Sannyasin you should go out covering your head; be aloof from the crowd; take your Bhiksha quickly without anyone's notice, and absorb yourself in work always. That is Sadhana." Swamiji had warned me about this habit of talking even here. Previously Swamiji used to live in the present hospital building. I used to sit in the room behind Swamiji's and give instructions to the other man with me about the Ashram work. Even this talk Swamiji did not like and had told me several times not to talk much and to engage myself in mental Japa while working.

I was fashionable Sadhu then, and was accustomed to a different type of living. One day I coloured Swamiji's clothes very fashionably with a light shade. Swamiji abused me and said that a Sadhu must wear dark Gerua-coloured clothes. He advised me not to attach any importance to the body or dress, but always to plunge myself in work. I had to recolour his clothes with Gerua!

Swamiji is now full of love, mercy and sympathy. 1 will tell you some instances from his early days. Once Dr. Hetram Aggarwal, Principal of the Medical College at Amritsar and a friend of his, who was a Professor in the Lyallpur College, were staying at the Brahmananda Ashram. Somehow or the other they happened to meet Swamiji. They had a simple talk with Swamiji and were enslaved. They visited this place again after some time when Swamiji gave some spiritual literature, the Twenty Instructions and the like. From then Dr. Hetram Aggarwal became more attached to Swamiji. Once Swamiji invited him to meals, and he asked me to prepare special South Indian dishes for him. In those days we had ration only for three people from the Kshetra. I prepared some special vegetable, good rice and Sambar. When he sat for meals Swamiji himself began to serve him and he asked me to fan the guest.

Swamiji's anxiety to look after the guests is inexplicable. Once we had a guest from Malabar, a Ranger. He explained to Swamiji how wild animals and elephants are caught. Swamiji was very enthusiastic to hear him. Swamiji used to serve him all the rice we were getting from the Kshetra and give us only the Rottis, as the Ranger was not accustomed to take Rottis. Once our guest was feeling hungry even after eating all the rice. Swamiji went to the jungle and brought him a fruit-something resembling pumpkin. He could not eat it. It was tasteless. Swamiji gave him some sugar and told him a Tamil proverb 'Chakkarai Pottal Kambaliyum Thinnalam', meaning, if you mix with sugar you can even

eat wool. He ate and filled his belly with the fruit and was taking rest. I was about to go to Ganga for washing the plates, when our guest remarked that I should also be feeling tired and asked me to take rest and wash the plates in the evening. Swamiji took me to task and made me to wash them then and there.

Siva Is Public Property

(Lecture delivered on 1st April 1952)

We should not judge a saint's glory from the number of books he has written or the material worth of the institution he has established. Look at his private life. In many cases you will find it is vulgar and awful. Not so in the case of Swami Sivanandaji. There is no secret about Swamiji's private life. He does not lead a cloistered life of secrecy and mystery. His life is an open book.

When a visitor comes, the first person he is able to meet in the Ashram is Swamiji himself! In other institutions, can he do so? No. A few months ago, I went to see a famous Mahatma; I had to get the permission of half a dozen Secretaries! The President, of no institution can be seen except with the permission of a number of demigods.

But here you do not know who the Secretary is; you do not know who the Manager is! Swamiji himself has to introduce you to the Secretary or Manager. Swamiji is running the institution in such a beautiful manner that everyone who comes to Ananda Kutir feels quite at home, without having to go through any kind of formalities like obtaining a Secretary's permission or a Manager's leave to stay.

No questions are asked, no conditions are prescribed. Swamiji says "Yes" to all that you propose. "You want to stay here? All right, stay here." "You want to go to Badrinath? All right, go to Badrinath; take

some spiritual literature for distribution and some medicines to treat yourself and others on the way." "You want to learn Asanas? Very good: Satchidanandaji will come to your room and teach you." "You want to go on an all-India Tour'? Very good; take a set of books and gramophone records also." "You want to go to Bombay? Excellent: take second-class fare. Here is the Jivanmukta-title for You."

Swamiji is ever ready to help you, guide you and serve you. All that he wants is: lead a pure life and do some good to humanity. He is not worried if you are going to repay his kindness or not. He is not anxious that you should go to far-off places and say: "I am Swamiji's disciple." All that he wants is that you should work for spiritual awakening.

A Novel Corrective Treatment

(Lecture delivered on 2nd April 1952)

Swami Sivanandaji does not treat all people alike: he does not give the same pill to all patients. He is extremely kind—in fact, to a far too excessive extent—to delinquents. Worldly-minded people think he is blind to the defects of others. The wise say that it is due to his divine vision.

For instance, I have actually seen him encouraging smokers! There was one Swami A in the Ashram; he was a heavy smoker. One day he did not have cigarettes. His brain did not function! Swamiji noticed this. He at once gave four annas to another Ashramite, to purchase a packet of cigarettes. When this was brought, he instructed that the packet should be kept underneath Swami A's pillow in his absence! Some felt that Swamiji was encouraging A against his own principles.

No. In such cases when the man comes to know how Swamiji goes out of the way to fulfil his cravings, he feels ashamed. He automatically

gives it up. And, in the meantime he gathers inner strength from the study of Swamiji's books. Till, then—till the man actually feels ashamed and gives up the evil habit—Swamiji goes on encouraging him! He will give all comforts and conveniences to a person who needs them, to one who is accustomed to such a life, so that his Sadhana may not be affected and his service may not be affected.

To Awaken Latent Talents

(Lecture delivered on 3rd April 1952)

During the last Kumbha Mela, a party of cigarette propagandists came to Muni-ki-reti singing all kinds of vulgar songs. I found they had a good voice and they were well equipped with musical instruments also. I called them and asked them to simply make some noise in the Mela Office of the Ashram, in order to attract public attention. I promised a few annas in return.

When he heard the noise, Swami Sivanandaji also came to the Mela Office. The moment he saw the music party, he said: "Bring tea, fruits, biscuits!" He offered all these to them. He asked them to sing good songs. Swamiji also joined. Later on he asked them: "Who are you?"

"We are cigarette propagandists, Swamiji."

"Ohji, you have sold enough of cigarettes. You have sang enough of the glory of tobacco.

Now why not sing Hari's Names? Now sing with me."

He himself sang a number of Kirtans. They followed nicely. Finally, Swamiji gave Rs. 5 to the party. He also gave them a lot of spiritual literature and asked them to distribute the leaflets and pamphlets among the public. "Along with your cigarette-songs, sing some Kirtans also!

Along with the cigarette-advertisement, give these spiritual literature also." Thus, Swamiji had created a taste in them for Kirtan.

Their latent faculties for singing God's Name had been awakened. They would surely evolve rapidly.

Another case in point is that of a poor beggar-boy who was sitting on the Ganga bank. He had a good voice.

I gave him a cup of tea and asked him to sing. Swamiji arrived on the scene. He at once said: "You stay in the Ashram itself. You are an inmate of the Ashram from now. Your only duty would be to sing a Bhajan during the night Satsanga."

In a similar manner, Swamiji has mysteriously created poets, lecturers, songsters, writers and artists by discovering and unveiling their latent talents.

Siva: A Unique Organiser

(Lecture delivered on the 4th April 1952)

Swami Sivanandaji's method of work appears to be absolutely unprincipled, shabby and ruinous. I told him once: "in other institutions the method is different". Swamiji says: "this is my way." And before our very eyes he has proved that his method is the best one, to get an example to the whole world.

When I say: "Swamiji! If it is an Ashram, it should be run on some principles and rules," Swamiji says: "No, this is not Sivananda Ashram but this is the Sivananda Asylum." It is only Swami Sivanandaji who could start and run an Ashram on such unprincipled lines and crown it with wonderful success. No other institution in the world was started on such shaky and uncertain foundations and established in such a

wonderful manner on such a world-wide scale. Today all other institutions are copying our principles. He had established a wonderful organisation in a most disorganised manner and today I hear from America: “The name Swami Sivananda is not unknown to us.” People in the West want to know Swamiji’s unique methods of work. H P S a great spiritual leader and writer of England wonders how Swamiji has been able to publish 150 books, whereas he himself is not able to sell even one book!

The secret lies in the fact that he is a living embodiment of the Gita and Upanishads. You read the eighteen chapters of the Gita or even get them by heart; you will learn nothing. But you can learn all that if you closely watch and follow the daily speeches and actions of Swamiji.

Swamiji need not teach you Yoga. All his actions are Upanishad and Gita. To learn Gita or Upanishads the only method is to approach Swamiji very close through some of the Departments at Ananda Kutir. All the various Departments of activity are not meant for him. They are meant for us. We can come closer to him by working in anyone of these departments.

Then you will come to know what a wonderful heart he has got. Do whatever work you like. Even if you have got some little weaknesses, he does not reject you. He asks you to make a conscious attempt to eradicate them. Feel that you are part of the Mission. Even if you have some bad habits like drinking tea or coffee, smoking, etc., Swamiji will lovingly sympathise with you. He says: “I will give you money for cigarettes; but will you serve the country.” Little weaknesses will be there. Swamiji gives a long rope to enable you to evolve. Through kind words he makes you see your way out of. those weaknesses. Even if your lower vicious nature expresses itself occasionally, he is full of

sympathy and tolerance. He is sure that one day you will evolve and be reformed.

When he has got such a large heart, if you put obstacles on his path or limit him in any way, he says; "I will not listen to you; I will deal with the people direct."

Even if a man does something wrong, Swamiji will not ask him to go away. He says: "Try to mend yourself." All that he wants is your evolution; that is his mercy.

When we say: "This fellow is a thief," Swamiji would lavishly love him. But now we see his wisdom. The very person whom we suspected in those days as a thief is today a pillar of the Divine Life Society.

For instance, Sri V. V. during his visit to Ananda Kutir said that he wanted to go and see Swamiji's Kutir and inspect every detail of Swamiji's life and comforts—the food he takes, the bed on which he sleeps, etc. I refused to allow him. He went home and wrote big letters full of non-sense. I would have torn him to pieces for that. But Swamiji said: "Do not write any reply to him" lest we should be harsh towards V. V. After two or three months, he wrote a letter of repentance. Today he is working wonders for the Divine Life Society.

N.S. of Madras, whose son had become a Sannyasin-disciple of Siva wrote ugly letters criticising Swamiji and abusing him. Today he is one of the staunchest followers of Swamiji and is working day and night for the Society.

Swamiji's method of work is unique; and that is the best. Other organisations should copy it.

Let The Guru Mould

(Lecture delivered on 5th April 1952)

By all means search for a proper Guru; take your own time to decide whom you are going to accept as the Guru. But once you make up your mind, stick to that Guru at all costs, in all circumstances.

Do total self-surrender to the Guru. Let the Guru shape your personality, mould your very being. People merely go on repeating "Mokshamulam Guror Kripa " but have they understood "Mantramulam Guror Vakyam"? Only when you have lived up to the wonderful maxims: "Dhyanamulam Guror Murtih Puja Mulam Guror Padyam, Mantramulam Guror Vakyam ", you will know what "Mokshamulam Guror Kripa " means.

Unless you surrender yourself completely to Siva, you will not be really benefited by staying near him. If you have your own ideas about Sadhana, he will not disturb them. He will rather encourage you to fulfil your own desires, go according to your wishes. You should have no ideas of your own, no desires of your own; then you will see the wonders he can work through you.

Swami J. met me at Madras. He said: "I told Swamiji (Sri Swami Sivanandaji): Swamiji! I want to go to Badrinath. He said: Yes, you can go. I went to Badrinath with Swamiji's permission only." This is not what a real disciple will do. If you desire to do a thing, Swamiji will not say no. But did the suggestion come from Swamiji? That is the point!

Just as there are tests of progress in the Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga, there are tests of true self-surrender to Guru Maharaj. The first and foremost is: do you become one with his mission! If you feel: "It is Swami Sivanandaji's work and I am a worker here", the surrender is not complete. If you feel: "This is my Mission; this is my institution;"

and work with heart and soul; day and night, then it shows your surrender is complete.

Secondly, you must be convinced beyond the shadow of doubt that whatever Swamiji says and whatever he does is right. He knows best what should be done for your spiritual evolution. He will guide your life in the best possible manner. You must joyously allow him to mould you. For instance: in 1940-42 1 had developed the idea "This is my institution" to such an extent that I was actually attached to it. Perhaps, Swamiji thought that that was not good for my spiritual evolution. He asked me to go away from the Ashram and lead a Parivrajaka life. That was the very best thing for me in the circumstances. It was an act of his saving Grace.

If Swamiji asks you to serve in the kitchen, do so; if Swamiji asks you to write ten thousand wrappers, do so; willingly and joyously. Never question. Never grumble. He knows what is the best.

The Miraculous Reformer

(Lecture delivered on 6th April 1952)

God has no difference between rich and poor and good and bad man. If Swamiji is really great, he should not have any partiality. He must see the same greatness in everybody. But there is a very peculiar nature in him. He shows leniency towards thieves and rogues which I condemn because it affects the Society. It is either partiality or favouritism. But there is another point we have to note here. Swamiji gives curd to a man who has stomach disorders. If my system is alright and I do not need curd, why should I feel for Swamiji's having given curd to another man? If a particular suffering man does not get a thing which he is in need of. Swamiji will not take his meals until he serves him.

A few years age there was a co-worker of ours here, a disciple of Swamiji. He did not take Dal or vegetables. He likes only Dahi (curd) and tomatoes. The steward used to keep curd specially for Swamiji. Swamiji used to run in the hot sun in search of our friend and serve him curd from the quantity reserved for himself before he took his meals. The steward naturally used to get annoyed with Swamiji. Why was Swamiji doing this? Because our friend was a good worker, highly intelligent, knew typing and was doing very good service to the Society. He was very fond of, and used to take only curd, and if Swamiji did not serve him curd, who else would? And Lo! look at our mentality, even if we do not want a thing, we are anxious to see that the other man does not get it.

In many other institutions it is very difficult to get admitted as an inmate. Even as a casual visitor one finds it very difficult to get admission there. In certain places, perhaps, one is allowed to stay for a day or so. In Ananda Kutir any man comes and stays for any number of days. Why is this so?Because Swamiji wants those who come here to feel at home, forget all their external worries and concentrate all their attention for the spiritual mission. I remember one particular instance. Some one from Bombay wanted to come to Ananda Kutir. Swamiji wrote to him to come here alone without any friends. It is because if he comes with his friends and relations naturally they will always be talking about Bombay and thinking of the Bombay life. If he comes alone he easily forgets the Bombay environments and utilises more time for his spiritual enlightenment.

In any organisation there are strict rules and regulations which have to be followed. Here you seem to be free to do whatever you like. Swamiji’s idea is that he has shown you the way (by his own example).

If you follow them you will be very useful to the country and will achieve your goal. If you do otherwise, it is your own Prarabdha.

Swamiji has a wonderful power for controlling even goondas or ruffians. I shall give you some instances. It happened during the all India tour. We were at Mayavaram. Swamiji was slightly indisposed then. He used to bleed through his nose even at the slightest exertion. I was feeling very much worried about it. I decided that Swamiji must be given complete rest for some time. He was housed in a nice bungalow and nobody was allowed to approach within even a furlong near the house. We stayed there for about two days. Swamiji's next visit programme was to Tanjore. A big procession had been arranged for Swamiji's welcome at an expense of over Rs. 3,000/-. Just then the Collector of Tanjore issued an order prohibiting any procession for Swamiji's welcome. I was upset and misunderstood his orders. The Collector himself was a disciple of Swamiji! Some hooligans of that area had planned to stone Swamiji's car. The Collector having obtained the information beforehand decided on this course instead of taking drastic action on the hooligans.

When we actually alighted at the Station thousands of people were there waiting for Swamiji, and the hooligans who were also in good number, instead of creating any trouble joined the crowd and accorded Swamiji a grand welcome and then led a marvellous procession themselves!

At Nellikuppam also a similar thing happened. It was the workers of the sugar factory there. They gathered in thousands on the Railway Station Platform. We had the warning at Madras about their intended attack. As a precaution I closed all the doors and windows and was at the gate to bear any blows. When the train stopped at the station the crowd tried to lift the window up. I resisted. I told them that Swamiji is ill and that he should not be troubled. When Swamiji heard the voice he got up from

the seat, and opened the door and chanted 'Hare Ram' Mantra. You will be surprised to learn that the entire mob repeated Ram Nam and garlanded Swamiji.

Swamiji has a wonderful personality. Nobody on earth can change my views. But when Swamiji tells me anything, I automatically say yes. I do not know why. It is not hypnotism, because hypnotism is short-lived. I am with Swamiji for the past twenty-five years.

Swamiji's heart is very soft. Even if a man steals money from his pocket he will not question him. Swamiji's faith is that by his prayers he will be set right.

In his early days in Swarga Ashram we were about half a dozen people with him as his disciples. Even amongst these six there used to be quarrels and misunderstandings! We used to have quarrels even over half a seer of milk! The first man who happened to be there would finish a cup of milk from it and pour a cup of water in its place, so on, with the result that when I go lastly, the pot will contain only water! When I complained to Swamiji about the incident, he said that from the next day he would distribute milk himself to all of us and he did it. The same petty troubles you find here even today.

A Rare Combination

(Lecture delivered on 7th April 1952)

A prominent person, Sri Janardana, editor of "Suddha Dharma", told me that I am Swamiji's Vivekananda.

When I denied it, he said, he had, concerning the point, written to Sri Swamiji and got Swamiji's reply which reads Yes: your diagnosis is correct. I told him that Swamiji has done the wisest thing in dropping

you a line of affirmation to avoid lengthy arguments and to save time. He could do nothing better.

I told Sri Janardana that I am in no way equal to Swami Vivekananda, who was as much learned as he was spiritually enlightened. He was great in more than one respect, and I can claim neither his oratorical powers nor his reforming spirit. It is impossible for me to play Vivekananda to Swamiji; moreover, Swamiji does not, in the least, stand in need of a Vivekananda to make him known to the world, whereas Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa needed that. Though a great God-realised soul, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa didn't know English to spread his healing influence all over the globe.

On the other hand, Sri Swamiji is not only a God-realised saint but also a most powerful speaker, an author of the largest number of books, a greatest religious reformer, a living Karma Yogi of the first order, who has conquered the hearts of millions in India and abroad. Far from looking up to a Vivekananda to make him great, Swamiji himself is acting the role of Vivekananda to many of his disciples. This is a fact evidenced by the numerous articles that are being published about his disciples in the pages of the Yoga Vedanta Forest University Weekly. When I thus spoke, I found Sri Janardana and all others around me were not only convinced of my statements but also loudly applauded my remarks.

Endurance Test

Once in Swarga Ashram, I requested Sri Siva to lend me a book for study. Abruptly he jumped on me —

"Why do you expect books from me? I used to go to Rama Ashram and study books there and took notes also. Go there. This is not a Library."

I told him, “much time is wasted in waiting for the boat. So I want a book for study.”

A flat refusal from the great master. Just imagine the feeling of a new aspirant. A marvellous test! He refused to give me a sheet of paper for writing purposes. Once he said: “I write on the backside of used envelopes too and on one-side paper.”

Can we expect a Sannyasi, a Guru to behave like this? Anyhow I wanted to stay with him for some time more to await an opportunity to attack him suitably. The blessed hour never came. He taught the student in so many bitter ways.

Instead of giving a book or a piece of paper on loan to a disciple, he proved that the entire Siva belonged to the aspirants. He allowed the world to see if Siva owns anything of his own to lend. Rather he belongs to the entire humanity without any reserve.

A Vegetable Test

Sri Radhakrishnan brought a basket of fine quality of tender brinjal from the market, and placed the lot before Siva while he was attending to correspondence, in the Office.

After a few minutes, Siva enquired: “This is a fine quality, indeed.” One of the disciple said, it is fit for preparing ‘Sambar’. Another said ‘Chutney’. Again another ‘Kootu’. Thus, Curry, Moru-kolambu, etc. came forth, from all those present. We were ignorant of the result of the suggestions. Siva exclaimed: So and so likes Sambar, so and so Kootu and so on.

Thus he easily found the taste of the students.

Technique Of Karma Yoga

Once Siva said: “If you want to serve coffee to a visitor, enquire whether he wants more sugar, or strong coffee.” ,

He advised, “In Karma Yoga, you should serve to the taste of the person. You can enquire which kind of fruits or biscuits the visitors like best.” According to this rule, he tries to know the taste of the students and awaits opportunities to satisfy their desires. If he knows that a man likes curd, he take a cup of curd to his room and after serving, then only he takes his food. He takes the trouble of walking in the hot sun, carrying the cup of curd.

It is dangerous to let the Master know the exact desire of a student. It will be always better to say: “I do not like it. That will not suit me.” Otherwise he is prepared to forego his comforts and conveniences for the sake of others.

Our Privilege

(Lecture delivered on 9th April 1952)

Today Sri Swamiji Maharaj in not attending the class. So I have some liberty to speak. In his presence I am checked by some power to avoid harsh words. Today I do not have the check. In case I slip, pray, forgive me.

Ekadasi Day. Sri Swamiji Maharaj observes fast. For years, he is not taking even a drop of water on Ekadasi (Nirjala-Nirahara). He stresses more on rigorous Sadhana, control of senses, inner purification through selfless service.

As a means to attain control of senses, developing devotion and increasing the power of concentration, he instructs all aspirants to

observe complete fast on Ekadasi. He advises to take light food, fruits and milk only if this is found very difficult by some.

As a collective Sadhana, saltless food is given to all in the Ashram on Ekadasi days. For some period this was introduced on all Saturdays. The new-comers and the inmates who do not care much for Sadhana or the instructions of the master, in the name of work, used to keep a small packet of salt and a few chillies in their pocket secretly on the previous night itself, stolen from the kitchen for the saltless Dal on Ekadasi Day. Sri Swami Maharaj felt: The Sadhana is only for their own good. If they do not appreciate the value of the discipline, why should I compel them? He became silent and allowed to have their own way.

Because he found that the aspirants do not care for daily practice, he relaxed the strict instructions, daily common prayer in Brahmamuhurta and Sankirtan at night. He hopes that one day they might appreciate and follow the teachings. This freedom gave chance for the aspirants to give more leniency to the mind. They lost the opportunity deriving the benefits of the teachings of the Master, though they had wonderful devotion, earnestness and aspiration in the beginning.

Any amount of Japa or hard Tapas done in our own may not bring the desired fruits. We have to learn a lot from the activities of the Guru, every moment. Real progress is possible only if we strictly follow his teachings to the very letter. Merely taking Mantra during initiation cannot bring peace or Moksha to you. Even study of religious books, Japa, etc. can clear our doubts, purify our nature and make fit to sit at the Lotus Feet of the Master. His Mantra can bring success in every way only if we follow his footsteps and lead an exemplary life.

We have to control our senses, closely follow his activities, move with him and observe minute details and try to please him by carrying out all

his orders. Our pure life must convince him that we are very sincere and earnest and steady. He must be convinced that we are prepared to sacrifice our all for the benefit of others. Thereby we improve and bring good to others also. Then alone we can find the efficacy of "Mantra-moolam Guror Vakyam", and the truth of "Moksha-moolam Guror Kripa."

We can find wonderful spiritual progress and inner peace if we follow all his instructions. We will acquire great powers if we all unite together and carry out the Divine Mission with greater enthusiasm for the uplift of country. We will tell our own experiences to others, new-comers and visitors and put them on the right path. We will sacrifice everything, heart and soul, for the Mission chalked out by our Master for our own welfare and spiritual good of humanity. This alone can give the Master the greatest Joy, Bliss and a New Life. Our noble actions will give him strength to live another 300 years. This will be the foremost duty of all aspirants, inmates and visitors to the Ashram. Now the field is prepared. The Master will be in a position to open the eyes of many and dispel the darkness in all corners of the whole world.

What is the use of ringing the bell and offering sweets before the Samadhi of Guru, after his death? Before his very eyes, in his presence, we will have to show our ability and talents in doing wonders for the benefit of the world. He is there to guide us to infuse in us a new power. The more we work, the more we awaken our hidden faculties. According to Sri Swamiji Maharaj, this is the real Yoga. I do not know about the future generations. Today we are lucky to remain at His Lotus-Feet, to hear His Powerful speeches. He gives us all comforts and conveniences, by closely watching he gives us guidance with great care. He is there, ready to remove all obstacles and encourage us in our activities. We should not lose the Golden Opportunity. At every moment, contributing

our might to the noble mission in some form or other, we must progress and lead a noble life, as a living model to the world. All visitors and new inmates will greatly be impressed by our daily life. Even by a short stay at the Ashram, we can learn a lot, and have the satisfaction of having led a fruitful life.

All saints of the past had their glory only after their death. To create faith in the masses, the intelligent disciples wrote many imaginary stories to glorify the Master. Today it is our fortune. We can enter the Highest Bliss by remaining in His Presence. We can easily grasp His Glory by closely watching His movements. There is no need for any exaggerated stories. He has today the satisfaction of seeing wonders in his life-time through the Daivi Mission he has established in a novel manner, suitable to all types, tastes and temperaments of the modern world. Glory to the Founder of the Mission and the selfless workers who have built the divine Cause willbe the voice of the people who have come in touch with the Divine Life Society.